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A HOME WEEKLY

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OLD

They call him old. It may be
  That snow is in his hair,
But in his heart is sunshine,
  For summer's always there.

He has true hearts to love him,
  And keep the cold away,
And where the frost is banished
  The summertime will stay.

I think such hearts as his is
  Can never more grow old,
Because so many love him
  With love that is untold.

He quaffs of love's elixir,
  And his heart is always young,
He has found the fabled fountain
  Of which old poets sung.

Oh, love me—love me always,
  And though my hair be gray,
My heart will keep the sunshine
  Of a happy summer day.

The Scarlet Captain:

OR,

The Prisoner of the Tower.

A STORY OF HEROISM.

BY COL. DELLE SARA,

AUTHOR OF "THE CAPTAIN OF THE LEGION," "THE PRIDE OF BAYOU SARA," "SILVER SAM," ETC.

CHAPTER V.

SKIPTON PASHA.

AND now in order that the reader may understand how it was that the two friends gained an easy entrance to the strongly-guarded tower of Dulcigno, we must retrace our steps.

Just as the evening shades were beginning to gather thick and heavy on the bosom of old Mother Earth, forth from the forest, near to the inn of the Black Bear's Head, came a manly form, well wrapped in a dark cloak and with a broad-brimmed hat pulled down over his eyes.

The stranger seated himself at the table under the cork tree, threw open the dark cloak, revealing the uniform of a Bashi Bazouk leader beneath, and pushed back the brigand-like hat from his brow.

A stout, jolly-looking fellow was this Turkish captain, but the head that sat upon the broad shoulders with its curly yellow locks and clear blue eyes, clearly never belonged to a native-born follower of the Prophet, the great Mahomet.

As all the world knows, two-thirds of the Turkish officers are foreigners, and this dashing Bashi Bazouk leader, one of the biggest scapegraces in all the Moslem host, Skipton Pasha by name, was as well known in his native town in old Yorkshire, England, as the traditional town-pump itself.

Tom Skipton he had been called at home, and a wilder boy never plagued a schoolmaster.

He had run away from home and enlisted in the army, served three or four years, then quarreled with one of the petty officers and thrashed him soundly, deserted and sought service with the Turks.

And now at the age of twenty-five we find him transformed from plain Tom Skipton, the devil-may-care English boy, into Skipton Pasha, a Bashi Bazouk captain; but, just as big a "limb" as ever.

Since his command had been quartered in the neighborhood of Dulcigno, an excellent patron of the inn of the Black Bear's Head, the Bashi Bazouk captain had been, for a capital judge of good wine was he.

A few such patrons and old Mother Koola, as the Turkish woman who kept the inn was called, would have made her eternal fortune, provided they paid cash, which, as a rule, Skipton Pasha never did.

With Shakspeare's ancient Pistol he cried:

"Base is the slave that pays!"

Therefore a good round sum he owed the hostess of the inn for refreshments furnished.

Patience at last with Mother Koola ceased to be a virtue, and therefore, when, that afternoon, the Bashi Bazouk captain with his boon companions had swaggered up as usual and called for wine, in language strong and emphatic, if not refined, for the hostess had a tongue of her own, she told the gallant captain that she must first see the color of his money ere he could taste the quality of her liquor.

The captain assumed a lofty air, affected indignation that his word should be doubted, cried lustily that before nightfall she should be paid in full and then swaggered away with his nose in the air, as proud as though he were the Grand Turk himself.

To tell the truth there was far more steel than gold to the life of the Bashi Bazouks.

The Turkish sultan was an excellent paymaster but a little irregular, and it was often months between the visits of the officials charged with the cash for the payment of the soldiers.

Night had come and with it the Bashi Bazouk captain.

From the window of the inn a pair of bright black eyes had been anxiously watching for the approach of the dashing Skipton Pasha, for it was not alone the red wine of the inn of the Black Bear's Head that had attracted the Bashi Bazouk captain. Zelina, old Mother Koola's daughter, the pretty maid, whom, perchance, the reader will remember we described as serving the tall unknown with the liquid refreshment, was as full of natural coquetry as an egg is of meat, and as Skipton Pasha was a fine, tall fellow, not averse to the society of a pretty woman, a flirtation between the pair had been quite in order.

Upon one of the buttresses overhanging the Adriatic sea, stood the two men.

Hardly had the soldier seated himself at the table when the girl stole through the door of the inn and hastened to greet him.

"Where is thine aged parent?" quoth Skipton.

"Down in the cellar," replied the girl.

"I presume she expects me to settle with her to-night?"

"No she don't," answered Zelina, quickly.

"No!"

"No, she says that she knows she will never get a copper of it."

The Bashi Bazouk laughed.

"It is astonishing how all my creditors come to think that way in a very short time."

"She is terribly angry, and threatens to do all sorts of dreadful things."

"Bah!" cried the gallant Pasha, in supreme contempt; "it is but noise. Upon my honor as a soldier I have done my best to raise the gold to pay the debt. I went to my brave and noble brother officers, and all Europe holds no better men; I explained to them the peculiar position in which I found myself. I told them, frankly, I love the charming daughter of the dame that keeps the inn of the Black Bear's Head"—and here the impudent fellow drew the giggling girl down upon his knee and imprinted a fond salute upon her pouting lips—"I owe the old woman money, and my course of true love will not run smooth until I pay up; gold I have not, therefore, comrades, aid me!"

"And did they?" asked the girl, anxiously.

"Ah! hearts of gold! At once they turned their pockets inside out, but as there wasn't anything in them, I didn't take it."

"Oh! how dreadful!"

And then came a sudden interruption to this tender scene, for out from the door of the inn bounced the old woman, and up from the knee of her lover jumped the girl. She fled precipitately around the house, and in at the back door, leaving the gallant captain to face the coming tempest alone.

"Oho! you've come back, have you?" growled the dame, a brawny woman of uncertain age, stout in figure, ugly in face, and boasting a mustache upon her upper lip which would not have discredited a grenadier.

"I have," replied the Bashi Bazouk, rising and bowing as politely as though he were addressing a princess.

"And the money—the money you owe me?"

"Patience!" cried Skipton, with the air of an ambassador; "patience," he continued; "this is a matter that requires time."

"And you haven't got the money to pay me!" persisted the hostess, not at all appeased by the wily art of the soldier.

"No, not to-night, I grieve to say, but to-morrow—"

"Ah, to-morrow it will be the same story!" exclaimed the dame, angrily. "I know you soldiers, varlets, all of you!"

"Nay, touch me not so nearly!" plead Skipton, theatrically. "By the beard of the Prophet, I swear I am an honest man!"

"There is only two ways to settle the matter," declared the old woman, in a very business-like way.

"Two ways?"

"Yes; either pay me what you owe, or—"

"Or what?"

"What do you think of me?" and the virago squared herself, placed her arms "akimbo," and looked the soldier straight in the face.

"Well, really, this is a delicate question." Skipton was amazed.

"I have been called good-looking," the hostess observed, with an air of great complacency. "I have had three husbands already, and as I got along very well with them, I don't mind trying a fourth. You are just the kind of man I have been looking for. I've got the gold-pieces and can take good care of you. I'm much better suited to you than that little slip of a girl, the baggage."

The Bashi Bazouk was thunderstruck at the offer.

"Come, is it a bargain?" continued the dame. "It is a splendid chance for you. 'Tisn't every man gets such an offer."

"Really I—I must request you to excuse me," Skipton stammered, for once in his life completely astounded.

"Oho! and that's the way the wind is, eh?" yelled the old woman, in a rage. "Well, now just listen to me; don't come 'round my inn after that baggage of a girl any more, or it will be the worse for you! Oh! you vile knave! if you dare to come to my house again I'll have you well thrashed!" And then the dame retreated to her castle, boiling over with indignation.

CHAPTER VI.

THE IRISH-TURK.

"AH, they can't help it!" Skipton exclaimed, surveying himself with complacency after the dame's hasty retreat. "It's no use; they can't withstand this elegant figure."

The sound of horses' hoofs interrupted the meditations of the Bashi Bazouk and a cavalcade came filing past—a troop of Turkish horsemen, and in the center two young and beautiful girls.

It was the Countess of Scutari and her foster-sister, Alexina, on their way to the dark tower of Dulcigno.

Skipton recognized the ladies at once. Only a few short months before he had made the acquaintance of the charming Alexina at Baden-Baden, he being absent from his duties on a furlough at the time. The English-Turk possessed a susceptible heart, always was ready to fall in love with a pretty face on the slightest provocation.

Alexina, recognizing the good-looking officer, bowed graciously to him as she rode past. The Bashi Bazouk was on tip-toes at once.

"My head to a Messina orange!" he cried, "but they are bound for the old tower of Dulcigno. I heard to-day that some ladies were expected there to-night. Aha! a chance to push my suit with Alexina. She must be pretty well provided with the ducats, too, being the foster-sister of the Countess of Scutari. I can easily get into the castle."

The Bashi Bazouk captain had an eye to business. He twirled his mustache, and canting back his head, smiled knowingly.

She will never be able to withstand this elegant figure," he murmured. "I must see Oflan Agan at once, for his troop are quartered just outside the castle, and he probably knows all about the arrangements of the guards."

"Speak of Old Nick and he is pretty sure to appear," so the bare mention of the name of the portly captain seemed to conjure him up, for the Irish-Turk came riding along in the gloom.

Perceiving Skipton he dismounted, tied his horse to the nearest tree, and approached the young Englishman in a most mysterious manner.

"Whist, ye blaggard!" he commanded.

"What's the matter with you?" the Englishman asked. He and the Irish-Turk were old acquaintances.

"Bedad, ye're the very man I wanted to see!"

"Well, that's strange, for you're the very man *I* wanted to see."

"Tare an' ounds! Is that so?"

"Yes; your troop is camped just outside the old tower, isn't it?"

"Divil a bit of a lie in that."

"How about getting into the tower?"

"Phat do yees want in the tower, ye thafe of the world?"

"There is a lady there," replied Skipton, mysteriously.

The Irishman winked first one eye and then the other, significantly.

"Oh, ye divil ye! an' phat is that to yees?"

"I have a very urgent desire to get a few minutes' conversation with her."

"It's not the Countess of Scutari?"

"Oh, no; her foster-sister, Alexina Petrovitch."

"It's difficult, ye haythen Turk, ye!"

"How so?"

"There's a sentinel at the gate, an' divil a fut can ye get inside the walls widout the password."

"Oh!" and the brow of Skipton contracted.

"But it's meself that's the b'ye that can give ye that password."

"You can?" the young Bashi Bazouk exclaimed in delight.

"Sorra taste of a lie in that!"

"My dear captain, the esteem I feel for you passes all explanation."

"Oh, wait til a while ago!" Oflan Agan retorted, again winking his little eyes in a manner intended to be highly mysterious. "It's a bargain I have to propose to ye. Ye have a gurl at the castle beyand, an' I have wan here: do ye mind?" and the Irishman pointed to the inn.

"The deuce you have!" and Skipton was visibly surprised, for it was plain the red-headed captain intended to poach on his preserves.

"Yes, sorr, as foine a slip of a gurl as can be found from here to the Black Say, an' it's a mighty favorable eye she has for a gintleman about my size!"

The Englishman did not express in words the feelings that possessed him, just then; his policy was to wait.

"But the ould woman, ah!" and the Irishman opened his mouth wide in disgust.

"Oh, she don't like you, eh?"

"No, sorr; an' just bekase I owe her a few paltry coins for her sour wine, bad 'cess to the liquor! I merely drank it so as to get a chance to court the gurl."

"Oh, yes; I see."

"It's a pot of b'ilin' wather the ould jade threatens to douse me with if she catches me near her door ag'in!"

"Is it possible?"

"Yis, sorr, it is; an' I've an appointment wid the gurl to-night; but, bad cess to me, if I like to venture near the inn in me own proper person, do ye mind."

Skipton was in a quandary. It was plain from this frank confession that the coquettish Zelina had more than one string to her bow, and all the time, too, he had fancied himself without a rival.

"Yes, I see," he said, after a pause; "the old woman is a regular tiger, and I've no doubt that she would be as good as her word."

"A bright idea has seized upon me!" suddenly announced Oflan Agan, "an' it's just this: the cloak and hat of yours—give them to me, an' in return I'll reveal to you the password so that you can git into the tower, an' once inside you can easily fool any questioners by saying that you are on the staff of Ismail Bey."

"Ismail Bey!" exclaimed Skipton, astonished.

"Yes, sorr, the commander-in-chief wid his staff will be at the tower to-night, an' wid so many strange officers about, you can easily manage to escape detection."

Skipton smiled; vengeance was within his grasp. This red-headed Irishman had dared to pay court to the fair but flighty Zelina, the girl whom he had fondly fancied was all his own. Oflan wanted his cloak and hat for a disguise. Muffled in the one and with the other pulled down over his eyes, the Irish-Turk would go to the inn; the enraged old woman would be sure to recognize the hat and cloak on the instant, and believing the wearer to be the man who had disdained her liberal offer, it was more than probable that his reception would be an extremely warm one.

"It's a bargain!" cried the Englishman, quickly, and stripping off the cloak and hat he gave them to Oflan Agan, receiving his red fez in return. "And now the password?"

"Albania!"

"Thanks; I'll be off at once; good luck to your wooing!"

"Oh, no fear of that!" cried the Irishman, confidently. "It's meself that's the b'ye for the ladies."

"*Allons!*" responded Skipton, hurrying away; but no further than the shelter of the wood did he go, for there he concealed himself to watch the fun which he felt sure would not be long in coming.

The Irishman wrapped himself up in the cloak, pulled the broad-brimmed hat down over his eyes, and then marched up to the door of the inn and knocked; confident in his disguise, he felt no fear of being recognized. As a stranger he intended to ask lodgings for the night.

The hostess within, from her post of vantage, a small window, closely latticed, a yard from the door, surveyed the person of the knocker and recognized the cloak and hat at once.

It did not take the angry dame long to guess the purpose of the intruder.

"He's after that little hussy!" she cried, in wrath, and then at once she summoned her servants.

Two stout Albanians were a part of her household—great rough fellows, mountaineers every inch.

The hostess and the two servants armed themselves with stout sticks, and when the chuckling Irishman, growing impatient, knocked again, out they rushed and fell upon him with right good will.

Knocked down at the first assault, taken completely by surprise, never was a mortal better thrashed; but at last, getting out his pistols, a shot put his assailants to flight, and then, sore in every limb the discomfited lover limped back to his camp, too much ashamed of his thrashing to raise an alarm.

And so it happened that the Irishman got well pummeled, Skipton Pasha got the password, securing entrance to the tower, which, half an hour later, he revealed to the American, Lauderdale, as he had agreed, and thus the Scarlet Captain gained admittance to the fortalice and set at naught the skillfully-devised plan of the renegade.

CHAPTER VII.

THE LEAP FOR LIFE.

A STRIKING tableau indeed that scene in the grand chamber of the old tower of Dulcigno, when the renegade Montenegrean, the Turkish general, Ismail Bey, at the head of his sabered swordsmen, burst into the room.

But the marriage rites were ended, and Catherine Belina, Countess of Scutari, was a wedded woman.

The renegade had learned that two strangers had gained access to the castle. The same wily Turk who, for a handful of broad gold-pieces, had revealed the secret of the hidden staircase to the two adventurers, after seeing them safely up the winding way had hastened at once to the quarters of the Turkish commander, eager to earn a fresh reward by betraying the men who had paid him, careful, however, to conceal his own share in the matter.

Unable to understand why the stranger should seek the presence of the Countess of Scutari, yet apprehending that their mission boded no good to his deep-laid schemes, Ismail Bey had at once summoned his followers and hastened to surprise the daring pair.

It needed no ghost from the other world to reveal to John Belina what had taken place when at the head of his sabered followers he burst upon the scene. The priest, standing with book in hand; the kneeling pair before him—brilliant, beautiful Catherine Belina and the unknown adventurer who had called himself by so strange a title, the Scarlet Captain.

For a moment the renegade stood motionless, transfixed with surprise; such an event as the marriage of the beauty whom he had caged so securely in the old tower, to any one but himself, he had never even dreamed of. But now there was no mistaking the situation. The Countess of Scutari had a husband, and all his deep-laid schemes had come to naught.

"Married!" he cried, his brow dark and lurid light flashing from his evil eyes.

"Yes, married!" cried Catherine, in triumph, her swelling voice sounding high above the bustle and confusion. "I am not yet twenty-one; I have a husband, and the lands of Scutari are mine, safe from your clutches!"

Upon the sudden entrance of the Moslem host, the bridegroom had sprung to his feet, and in his right hand gleamed his trusty saber, while his left grasped a silver-mounted, self-cocking revolver.

Lauderdale also had his weapons out. Despite the number of the foe no thought of surrender or submission was in the mind of either of the two adventurers.

The renegade fairly ground his teeth with rage.

"Upon these two dogs!" he cried, in wrath; "cut them to pieces!"

But neither one of the two friends waited for the Moslem onset.

Between them and the secret stairway—the avenue to liberty—the turbaned host were gathered, and bold and straight as the free mountain eagle darting upon his prey, they flung themselves, actuated by a common impulse, upon the armed men.

The barrels of their revolvers clicked around, with marvelous speed, shot succeeding shot, and each bullet found its billet in the person of a Turkish warrior.

And the renegade himself felt the sweeping force of the Scarlet Captain's steel, as, taking advantage of the gap produced in the Turkish line by their well-aimed shots, the adventurers boldly charged forward, striking vigorously for liberty.

The saber of the Turk was shattered in twain as he opposed the blade to ward off the powerful stroke which else would have cleft his head in twain.

The force of the blow bent the Turkish leader to the ground, and, seeing him fall, the Turks, believing him to be slain, were seized with a sudden panic and gave way before the bold attack, thus affording the two friends free access to the secret stairway.

Down the winding way the two ran, hastily thrusting their emptied revolvers in their slings, and drawing forth fresh weapons.

They were not yet out of the old tower, and another desperate struggle was certain.

The two gained the open court-yard in the center of the castle.

All was dark, the gates securely closed, while from the loop-holes, pierced in the stone walls for musketry, lights were gleaming and sounds of wild alarm were rising.

Agile as the wild goats of the Montenegrean mountains, the two scampered around the court-yard. Not even a passage could they find, big enough to afford escape to a half-starved dog, with the exception of the open doors of the main stairway of the castle, which was dimly lighted by a single lamp suspended in a niche in the wall.

"We are caged like rats in a trap!" the Scarlet Captain cried, as the two paused before the stone stairway and looked wishfully up the broad passage.

"Yes; the fall of their leader has evidently confused them, but as soon as they recover we'll have them around us as thick as hornets when the nest is shaken."

"Old fellow, if we escape from this danger, we can mark to-day as one to be remembered!" cried the Montenegrean. "Oh, for the wings of one of the eagles of my own native mountains to surmount these cursed walls!"

The cries of alarm and clang of arms grew louder and louder.

"The tug of war is near at hand!" the American exclaimed, taking advantage of the few moments' respite to recharge his revolver. "We are in for it, and I suppose there is nothing to be done but to sell our lives as dearly as possible, and die game."

Here spoke the courage of the man who had led Longstreet's attacking column at Knoxville, and, entangled in the hedge of telegraph wires and debris, cunningly arranged by the Federal general, had cheered on his men, despite the terrible, point-blank fire from the Union forts, until wounded in a dozen places, he had sunk insensible from loss of blood.

"Ah, but my country—Montenegro needs me now!" the Unknown exclaimed. "I have only a single life to lose, but there is no man from the Adriatic to the mountains whose loss would be felt as sorely as mine."

Again the clang of arms rung out, and the tramp of many feet sounded upon the air.

The crisis was near at hand.

"To escape through these massive walls is impossible!" Lauderdale cried, "nor are we winged like birds to surmount them; but this stairway is open. Let us boldly dash upward, no matter where it goes! Our position can be no worse than it is at present!"

"An excellent idea!" the Montenegrean assented. "Perhaps by it we can force our way to the roof of the tower, and then from the ramparts it is only a leap of a hundred feet or so down into the sea."

And with the word, the captain sprung up the stairway, closely followed by the American.

Not a moment too soon was this action taken, for they had not ascended three steps when the renegade, recovered from the shock of the blow which had beaten him down, led his Moslem saberers from the gate of the secret stairway into the court-yard.

The Turks had provided themselves with lanterns and torches, and so at once they perceived that the fugitives were missing.

"The gates are closed!" cried dark Hassan; "the main stairway is the only way open!"

"They are safely trapped then!" the renegade replied.

Up the massive way bounded the armed host, the renegade and Hassan in the advance.

They passed the dim circle of light afforded by the lamp in the niche, and toiled upward in the dark, their torches offering but a fitful glare.

And to their listening ears, as they followed so closely in the pursuit, came the jingle of the sabers of the fugitives as they fled toward the roof.

The moon, just rising above the horizon, afforded a dim light for the striking scene about to be enacted upon the ramparts of the old gray tower.

Upon one of the buttresses overhanging the swelling Adriatic sea, stood the two men as the Moslem host rushed out upon the flat roof.

"Fire upon them!" cried the renegade

A sheet of flame illuminated the top of the dark tower for a second, and by its light the attacking host saw the two adventurers disappear from their airy pinnacle. Down they went into the sea beneath!

(*To be continued—commenced in No. 394.*)

A MULE struck lately on the Erie tow-path. They have found a strap and one suspender button that belonged to the driver.

MY MARRIAGE NIGHT.

Respectfully Dedicated to Miss S. E.

BY HERMAN KARPLES.

Golden sun, now in the east,
Hasten, hasten to your setting!
Lovely purple mountains fleeced
With the moon's first light and letting
All your somber shadows lie
Athwart the plain,
Catch upon your forehead bare
Cynthia's beams so soft and tender!
Evening lights are far more fair
Than the morning's rosy splendor
Braided in your tangled hair
Like a gleaming chain.

Lovely birds, with plumage rare,
Sing sweet songs, then cease your warble,
Fold your pinions, light as air
O'er your home 'midst snowy marble,
While you guard your nestlings
Through the silent night.
Shining stars unveil your light
O'er my love, who lies a-dreaming.
Whisper "'Tis your marriage night!"
Set her tender eyes to beaming
With the softness and the passion
Of love's light!

A Woman's Hand;

OR,

THE MYSTERY OF MEREDITH PLACE.

BY SEELEY REGESTER,

CHAPTER XVIII.

A FEW THREADS.

MISS MILLER sat in the little low chamber of Lillian's house, which she had occupied since the day of the *accident*, which had disabled her from returning to the city for such a length of time that she decided to have Lillian write to Mrs. Chateaubriand to procure another governess, her engagement coming to a close in a few weeks, at best.

It was now the first of July, and a period of rest to be enjoyed; to her, from physical pain, to Lillian, from the cares of her school—this being the first day of the summer vacation. Miss Miller leaned back in her arm-chair, looking idly out of the window and listening to a murmur of voices coming up from the parlor beneath; she could distinguish nothing that was said, and did not try to; but she knew who were there, and the probable topic of their conversation. Her face, paler and thinner than its wont, bore the look of mental trouble. Bodily suffering might bring pallor and loss of flesh, but it had not here, for the woman's courage was great, and her splendid physique enabled her to bear the pain of a broken arm without flinching; *that* was not what had changed her and given that settled contraction to the black brows and drawn lines about the firm mouth. The low fever which had kept her a prisoner from April until July was entirely a mental malady.

There had been no gossip whatever in the village about the accident. When Lillian received my messages by Gram'me Hooker, she had gone alone to Meredith Place, unlocked the door whose key I had left on the outside, sat down by the bed where her friend lay looking up at her with defiant eyes, asked and received an explanation.

Whatever that explanation was, it was of a character not to entirely break the existing friendship: when the two had had "their talk out," Miss Meredith called gram'me and sent her to the hotel, with a penciled message to Arthur Miller to come, quietly, with a carriage, for his sister had been injured by a fall at the old house, and needed assistance to return to her (Lillian's) home.

Arthur had responded speedily to the call. He must have been very much alarmed, for he was trembling visibly, and was whiter than his sister when he came into the laboratory.

"Good heavens, Annie! What—how—"

"Never mind the what or how, Arthur. I fell and broke my arm. A physician has already set it. What I want of you is to convey me home before the neighbors get a hint of what has occurred and come crowding in."

He gave a sharp glance about the room. Lillian, at Miss Miller's request, had previously gathered up the money in the bag and placed it in a little basket on her arm, yielding to the former's suggestion to keep matters quiet by concealing from the public what had been discovered.

"You must have been out early," remarked Arthur, when his survey was completed. "Was Miss Meredith with you?—and how did you contrive to fall in that awkward style?"

"I was out early; Lillian was not with me: and you know I am always awkward. I don't feel much like indulging in long explanations."

Something in her tone brought the blood into his face, which was now as red as it had been pale.

"I am glad you are hurt no worse, Annie," he said, after an instant's hesitation; and for once in his life there did really seem to be a touch of genuine feeling in his tones. "My state of mind was not enviable when I received the message, not knowing how serious the accident might have been."

And, indeed, he still looked haggard.

"I have the easiest carriage I could get at the livery. Come, sis, shall I help you up now? And who set your broken arm?—has old Doctor Smith been here?"

"Never mind about the doctor. It is set, and that suffices. Now."

She walked firmly enough to the carriage, but its motion, as they drove over the country-road, was a pretty severe trial; and when they helped her out at the cottage, she was quite ready to go to bed.

That night she insisted on her brother staying with her, and lying on the couch in her chamber, saying that she was feverish and should want occasional attention, and that Lily should not be broken of her rest; Sabbath night the same, it would be time enough for Lillian to take her turn when Arthur was no longer there. He had submitted quite meekly, and, altogether, was so attentive to his sister, so obedient to her caprices, so really anxious about her, as to rise considerably in Lillian's esteem, who usually had small respect for him.

Inez could hardly feel sorry at Miss Miller's sufferings—she was thereby given so fine an opportunity for trying the charms with which the old woman of the forest had supplied her; and, whether the spell worked, or whether it were simply that the black eyes were present and the blue ones absent, Arthur was at her feet as in the days before he met Bertha, begging for Spanish songs, and smiling to see the light glow in those wonderful, lustrous eyes.

But the greatest change which the events of the last two days had worked was in the mind of Lillian Meredith. Any one, knowing her well, as Miss Miller did, would have said that she had found relief from some pressing and constant care. It could not have been the acquisition of the thousand dollars which had come so strangely into her possession, which thus lightened her steps and brightened her eyes. What Miss Miller had told her, only themselves knew. My letter could not have had the effect I desired, since her governess still was her dear friend, and no viper, as I had informed her she ought to consider her. Had I been where I could have observed the effect, I should have told myself that the consummate art of that woman had carried her safely through this disaster, and left me lower sunken than ever in the opinion of the only person on earth for whose opinion I cared.

But I was far away from there at length, considering that my intermeddling had accomplished all it ever would; and as Gram'me Hooker's education had never reached to the hight of inditing and directing a letter without assistance, and as I had forgotten to arrange with her to address me under an assumed name, I was entirely without means of knowing how the story of life was unfolding, leaf by leaf, at Meredith Place.

Unfolding, rosily enough, under the apple-blossoms of May and the flowery bowers of June, as far as any human eye might read. For, as has been written, there was an unusual amount of gayety; youth, leisure and wealth held high holiday, not only at the old mansion, but all around the pleasant village. It was to be taken for granted that the bride-elect was happy; Sophie had her beaux and Inez her cavaliers, while Lillian was followed by Don Miguel as by a shadow.

And now, as said at the beginning of this chapter, summer had come, bringing with it the beginning of a holiday for Lillian.

Miss Miller sat, thinking and listening, while the murmur of voices went on below. At last, her thoughts overran her lips:

"I do pray that she will decide in his favor. If she accepts him, this dark, dark night of doubt and sin will begin to break. If she refuses him, what is there for any of us but suffering, suffering, disgrace! Ah, me! if I could quiet the voice of conscience—as I can, as I will, if she marries the Don. She will be rich, then, rich and happy; hers will be a brilliant destiny, and I need mar no other to make hers."

Again she relapsed into reverie, until the sound of a hasty step, of some one going out the little gate, startled her, and she leaned forward eagerly.

"He has gone! She has refused him!"

"You are the picture of despair," cried Lillian, breaking into her room. "What *has* happened to give you such a desperate expression?"

Her own face was flushed and the tear on her cheek was not dry.

"It is you who must tell me that, child. You knew my heart was set on your accepting Don Miguel, and you have refused him. I can tell it by the manner of his leaving the house. And of course he will never speak to you again. This is the third time."

"He should not have persisted."

"Oh, Lily, he loves you so, and is in every way a gentleman. I do not know what you can be thinking of, to throw away such an opportunity."

"Opportunity for what?"

"Getting settled in life."

"So a husband is only to be viewed as a means of getting settled for life! Now, I thought you had more enthusiastic views, my dear friend. And as for settlement—are not we, you and I, settled for life? I thought you liked it as much as I."

"You dear, heroic darling! do you suppose I wish to devote you, in your youth and beauty, to the same shrine upon which I was sacrificed? If you can do no better, stay with your old friend. But, here is a vista of splendor opens before you; even your vivid imagination could never have pictured anything better. I need not go over the list of the Don's good qualities; he loves you sincerely, wants you for his wife, and you strangely refuse him. Lillian, what is the matter with you?"

The pure blue eyes met the stormy, troubled ones of her friend.

"I do not love him—that is all. He is a foreigner; our tastes and habits are not in sympathy. I admire him more than any other man I ever met; but I do not love him—never shall. I do not care for the gay life he leads. My native woods and country walks are dear to me. I love this village, and I love *you*, Miss Miller, and wish to spend my life with you. I thought we should 'live happily ever after,' as they say in novels, and here you are doing your best to drive me away from you."

"There's an obstinate grain in your temper, Lillian."

"Perhaps there is. If so, I ought to be glad of it; for surely I shall need a mind of my own, since I have my own way to make in the world."

"But you need not make your way; another stands ready to care for you, and that is what I desire to see done."

"Please say no more about it," pleaded the young girl, kissing the other's cheek; "I'm wearied out with my argument with *him*. He is not as mild as an angel, I assure you; though he has far, far more self-control than Inez. He went away deeply offended, despite of the tear with which I asked him to forgive me; but if anger will make his disappointment any easier to bear, I shall not be sorry. I suppose he will leave Hampton, taking his cousin with him, as soon as the wedding is over. It is only three weeks until then, and I believe Inez will wish to remain."

"Since you persist in this folly of throwing away all that is joyous and bright in your young life, I must say that the sooner those two go away the better. I would give much to have Inez away from here before the marriage."

"Why?"

"To tell you the truth, I am afraid there will be a scene. She imagines that she has an interest in Arthur."

"I hope you are mistaken, Miss Miller. She has seemed very happy, lately—entirely taken up with her engagements to pleasure-parties and in planning her dress for the coming occasion."

"Inez is not what you think her, child; I am glad she is going away from you."

The tears welled into Lillian's eyes.

"She has been rather of a trial, in some respects, I acknowledge—but, after all, she was my father's wife."

A shudder which she could not repress ran through Miss Miller's frame.

"She was—she was, Lily—that is the worst of it!"

"Do you think her so bad, then?"

"Totally unfit to have been *his* wife. She is good enough for Arthur, though. I wish he *had* married her."

"Why, what is the matter with you, this afternoon? I thought Arthur was the apple of your eye. I shall believe you are a little insane, you talk so at random."

"Don't say that!" with a horrified air; "you may be touching very near the truth. Sometimes I think I am losing my reason. What would you think, Lillian, of a woman thirty-five years of age, of keen intellect and good moral cultivation, who could not tell right from wrong?"

"Could not tell right from wrong?"

"Yes, if the plainest question of right was put to her, she distorted it, twisted it to suit a glaring wrong—wouldn't you say that her mind *must* be diseased?"

Lillian looked up into the deep, dark eyes, whose troubled gaze turned away from hers, wondering at the anxious, wrinkled brow, and the sad voice.

"I don't know what you are talking about, Miss Miller; but this I know, your mind is sound as a judge's ought to be, and your heart—is only too tender to a clinging orphan, who has no other friend,"—and she laid her head on the other's knee, who made a movement as if to push it away, but restrained herself.

Neither spoke for some time, then Miss Miller repeated:

"I wish you would recall Don Miguel."

"I cannot."

"If I could see you happily married to him, I believe my perplexities would be at an end."

"You are as bad as some match-making mammas."

"Yes, I suppose so. I want you to do well, my child, in a worldly sense—to see you in possession of at least as much fortune as you would have had had Dr. Meredith lived. That would content me, I think," with a sigh.

"And *I* think the sooner we return to an ordinary state of existence the sooner we shall be content. We will regard Don Miguel, hereafter, as a brilliant meteor flashing across our Northern sky; now we must be satisfied with the 'cold light of stars.'"

"Well, Lillian, I can only say that you have disappointed me, and made great trouble. If you only *could!*"

"But I *could not*, Miss Miller; and I don't like to feel that I am making trouble, or being obstinate. Perhaps you do not care to have me to live with you. Perhaps you are tired of me."

"Lillian, I love you better than anything on earth; say no more; I have hurt your feelings; let it pass. That is not the worst. You will know, soon enough. Justice shall be done, as soon as I have conquered the last weakness of my nature. Do you know what has become of Inez this afternoon?"

"She went to walk in the direction of Gram'me Hooker's."

"Alone?"

"I think so. She has taken quite a fancy to gram'me; they have long talks together nowadays."

"What sort of person is Mrs. Hooker?"

"You have seen her often enough to judge for yourself."

"I mean is she a conscientious, reliable woman; or is she one of those who would do anything for money?"

"Oh, she is a good woman—I wish I were as good."

"Then no great harm can come from Inez's visits."

"Of course not. But I am surprised that Inez is so interested in her, when she used only to ridicule her."

"Some one else pays long visits, too. Gram'me must be a very entertaining old lady."

Lillian blushed. "Gram'me and I have been friends ever since I was old enough to remember. I go there to talk over old times with her and to see to her wants, and—" she paused.

"So I suppose," remarked Miss Miller, dryly.

"I do believe you are in a fault-finding mood to-day," said Lillian, her voice trembling slightly. "I do not know how I shall put you in a better humor unless I go and provide something very nice for tea," and with that sweetness of disposition which made her what she was—so lovable to all—she conquered the resentment she felt at her friend's manner, and went down to the little kitchen to suggest something appetizing for the invalid.

When she had gone, Miss Miller sprung to her feet and raged about the little room like a lioness in her den. She was not one to give way easily to outside demonstrations of emotion, so that, had Lillian seen her, as she now appeared, with clenched hands and teeth set in her under lip, she would have been both surprised and shocked.

"It shall be done! If the old house tumbles about their ears, *it shall be done!* If I had possessed courage from the first, fewer friends would have been involved in the ruin. I have seen the golden stream wasting—wasting, and my life-blood has wasted with it. I will keep silence till the twentieth of July—until after—until it is too late. Oh, what a miserable compromise! How am I punished!"

CHAPTER XIX.

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DRAMA.

YOU have heard of hearts caught in the rebound? This threatened to be the fate of Don Miguel's, and Sophie was the happy maiden who had the chance of catching it. Sophie always had been pretty enough, but so colorless and inert beside her magnificent and spirited sister, as to scarcely receive due appreciation. She was like a pink rose beside a scarlet geranium, or Madame Pauline's blue dress in one of Josephine's green chairs.

Now, however, the excitement of hope and expectation—and, too, we will do her the justice to confess—the development of all the imagination, passion, and romance, of which she was capable, combined with country air and the joyous business of preparing for her sister's wedding, were acting upon her far more efficaciously than any cosmetic she had ever tried. Her lady-mother looked upon her with admiring surprise, while Bertha condescended to approve and encourage, now that no danger existed, of their interests clashing. Sophie's hair was flaxen, not golden, like Lily's, and she trained it into flossy ringlets, very becoming to her fair, delicate face; she wore roses in her hair, too, after Lillian's fashion, and put on little shy, graceful airs that were not in her usual style.

To look in at Meredith Place on any of these golden, languorous July days, no one not previously informed could dream of the tragedy which had darkened it a little over a year ago, nor that the icy shadow of that tragedy had only withdrawn itself a little while, and was creeping, creeping slowly and surely back, with a double darkness in its chill. One soul there knew of the approaching shadow, and felt the premonitory gloom, but all others were basking in the brightest sunshine of their lives. Inez and Lillian were at the house almost constantly, there were so many consultations to hold, and so many pleasant tasks to perform; while Miss Miller could not refuse the urgent solicitations of Mrs. Chateaubriand to stay with them a few weeks and take upon herself a portion of the responsibilities weighing down the matron—cares no heavier than the ordering of refreshments, the arrangement of rooms, and the small details of invitations, cards, etc., so that she was now an inmate of the mansion, and would remain there until after the wedding.

A troop of beautiful girls—lighting up the old place with their sunny faces, exciting themselves delightfully all the long mornings over new dresses, and wreaths, and the bridal vail, allowing themselves to be entertained by ambitious young gentlemen through the later hours of the afternoon—at evening filling the old hall, the porches and parlors, with sweet laughter, murmuring asides, music and song—cast the witchery of their youth and loveliness over the ruins of the past.

Mrs. Chateaubriand was busy and satisfied, now that her second daughter promised to do so well, overlooking the *mesalliance* of the first, and making a great pet of Lillian, who had been such a little goose as to resign Don Miguel in Sophie's favor. Not that any one was by any means certain that the Don would so easily change his affections; he was less gay than formerly, and his gaze often lingered upon Lillian with more of sadness than anger; but pride prompted him to the effort of being attentive to some other lady, and his attentions fell, by chance, upon Sophie. Even this was much to hope from—only the time was short; for, directly after the marriage festivities, Don Miguel was to take his cousin away on a round of the fashionable summer resorts—and then, in the autumn, back to Havana.

Miss Miller was the only one who did not improve under the sunny influences of the time. Pale, wrapped in thought, nervous, easily startled, with no appetite and no spirits, her illness had left her in a state which gave serious alarm to Lillian, who hoped the visit at Mrs. Chateaubriand's would do her friend good, but who noticed that she daily grew more absent-minded, walking about like one lost in dreams. In fact, Miss Miller's old habit of sleep-walking had returned upon her, in the present state of her health, and many nights she moved like a ghost amid the garden-walks and along the halls of Meredith Place. Mrs. Chateaubriand wished some one to share her room in order to care for her and break up, if possible, this dangerous and inconvenient habit of sleep-walking, but Miss Miller was so averse to having a servant, or even one of the young ladies, in her apartment, that the suggestion was dropped.

Her brother Arthur manifested real uneasiness at her new freaks of somnambulism, and was urgent, almost to anger, that she should have some one sleep with her, but she persistently refused. He came up a fortnight before the wedding, and took rooms at the Hampton House. Don Miguel, and the other young men, laughed at his nervousness and his impatience at the lagging steps of time. The bride-elect may well have felt flattered at this eager count of the lessening days.

One evening—the tenth of July—the gay party gathered in the parlor were startled by the sudden bursting of a thunder-storm overhead. It was an awful storm, lasting several hours, and when it had subsided somewhat it did not entirely give over raining, so that the visitors were glad to accept the invitation to remain over night. Inez, who staid with Sophie more than half the time, shared the room of the latter, as usual, while Lillian accepted Miss Miller's rather reluctant offer of hers.

As soon as they reached the chamber, Lillian began to undress, being wearied out with the sultry day; but Miss Miller sat by the open window, watching the tremulous play of the distant lightning, and listening to the mournful cry of a whippowil, which pierced the darkness with its melancholy complaint.

"Are you not coming to bed, Miss Miller? You are so pale, I am sure you must be fatigued."

"Yes, I *am* tired, Lily—very, very tired, with a weariness which sleep will not remove."

She spoke so languidly, so hopelessly, that the young girl turned and came to her side, noticing more than ever before the hard, rigid lines which were settling upon the face of her best friend—a face square and powerful for a woman's at its best, and now fixed in a stern, sallow harshness, which would have repelled any one but her companion.

"Miss Miller, you have some trouble, which you do not tell me."

"Let me alone—let me alone a few days. You will know soon enough."

"You are not going away?"—that was the worst thing Lily could think of.

"No, child—not unless you send me."

"You do not mean—it cannot be that you—have learned—know—have discovered anything about poor papa!" exclaimed Lily, falling on her knees, and gazing up with a wild look at the stony face before her.

"Nothing new, darling Lily; why do you question me? If I have anything to tell, you shall know it in due time. Go to bed—you are exciting yourself too much. I will come in a few moments," and she kissed the young girl, gently pushing her away—"not that I expect much rest to-night. I shall walk in my sleep, I dare say. I always do when there is a thunder-storm—and I always feel wearied the next day, as if I had kept watch."

"I waken so easily; if you stir I shall hear you, and then I will not let you leave the room," said Lillian, and creeping into bed, she laid with wide-open eyes fixed on the pale face of her governess, relieved against the blackness of the open window. She meant to be very wakeful and to take excellent care of the somnambulist, but, presently, the drowsy lids drew together, the flush of sleep warmed in the delicate cheek, she just turned with a soft breath, when her friend laid down beside her and knew no more for hours.

When Lillian awoke the hall clock was striking three. She reached out her hand, and finding the bed vacant, sprung out upon the floor. A night lamp was burning dimly; through the casement she could see the stars breaking through flying and ragged clouds; the door of the chamber was half-way open. Throwing a dressing-gown over her night-robe, and thrusting her feet into slippers, she went softly but quickly out into the hall, where a light always was kept burning, by order of the mistress of the house. Finding no one in the lower hall she ran lightly down the stairs, and proceeding toward the back door, she almost ran against some one crouching down by the laboratory door.

"Is it you, Miss Miller?" she whispered, not caring to awaken the household by speaking more loudly.

At first there was no answer, but, upon her pressing more closely, the figure straightened itself and she made out Inez.

"What do you want?" she whispered, defiantly.

"I am looking for Miss Miller; she has gone out, in one of her trances again. Have you seen her?"

"No," replied Inez, evidently relieved, and coming forward, "but I heard her pass my door, and slipped out to look for her. I fancied she might have gone in here, but all is dark and still. She may be in the garden. Do not go out in those thin slippers. As for me, I'm going back to bed. If she *will* walk in her sleep, walk she must—I shall not run the risk of a cold."

Darting noiselessly up-stairs, Lillian heard her close the door of Sophie's room; she tried the outside doors, but, as they all were fastened, decided that the somnambulist could not have gone out; so she passed through the parlor and library, and on up to her room, just in time to see the one of whom she was in search glide into it in advance of herself. Lillian followed and closed the door.

"Lily, Lily," said the sleeper, walking up to the bed and speaking in a sharp whisper. "Where are you?"

"Here I am. I have been looking for you."

"*The figure eight!*" continued the somnambulist, turning and coming toward her with staring, stony eyes, and one arm extended. "I have found it, Lily—look here!"

As she approached the other saw something glitter in the outstretched hand, which, as she held it up, clutching it tightly, Lillian perceived was a handful of ingots.

"See, Lily, see, THE FIGURE EIGHT!"

Lillian turned very faint with surprise, excitement, and the terrible thrill which ran through her at sight of the stony face, and the eager hand clutching her father's gold.

"Where did you get it? Oh, Miss Miller, awake, awake, and tell me where you have been and what this means!"

"I followed *him*," said the governess, still in the same hollow whisper. "Him! the wicked, the ungrateful. Oh, how he makes my heart ache."

"Who?"

"You know, Lily! why should we speak his name? That is my secret—that is what is killing me by inches. But the whole world will know now. No, no! I have found the box now, and all is well. All is well—well! I need not betray—need not disgrace. I have looked so long for that box now, Lillian, that you might have your own, and yet not ruin *him*. Take them—feel of them, then you will be sure!"

Lillian, with a nervous shudder, took the dull, slender, heavy bars in her fingers, looked at them, and laid them on the table.

"Have you found the box?" she asked, beginning to tremble as if with cold.

"Yes, I followed him. I stood behind him, and he did not see me. When he was gone I took a few to show to you."

"Where is it?"

"Come, we will go there, right away, before I forget."

She opened the door and glided out, followed by Lillian, pale as the shadow of a phantom following the phantom which led, going along the upper hall to the side passage which branched to the east, straight to the door which led up to the tower. This she opened, and was about to place her foot on the stairs, when she paused, put her hand to her forehead, and murmured—"No, it was down—was it up?—no, down."

Hesitating a moment, she began to ascend, but in climbing the steep and narrow stair she made a misstep and came to her knees, with a shock which awakened her.

"Where am I?" she exclaimed, looking wildly about, and then finding herself on her knees at the foot of the tower staircase, and poor Lillian bending over her with a distressed expression, she burst out laughing and went off into a hysteric fit.

Though much frightened, for she had been told that the shock to the system from too sudden awakening was dangerous, Lillian had presence of mind to coax and drag her into the main hall, before she summoned help; then, calling Miss Chateaubriand's maid, who was also quite a nurse, the two conveyed Miss Miller back to her bed, where the maid administered one of her mistress's favorite nervines, while Lillian hastily concealed the ingots in her bureau. Nearly all the household were awakened by the convulsive laughter of the somnambulist, but when the matter was explained to them they retired again—all save Arthur, who dressed himself, or was already dressed when the alarm occurred, and who, pale and restless, wished to watch with his sister.

But, as he could not very well force himself into a young lady's chamber, and as the nurse avowed herself equal to the occasion, he was obliged to leave the patient in other hands.

(*To be continued—commenced in No. 385.*)

THE MAID OF LINDEN TOWERS.

BY J. M.

Though down the stream of Time I creep,
As up that stream my days have crept,
I in my heart one picture keep
While years have in their slumbers slept.

The sunburst of the rosy morn,
That shone upon life's natal day,
Still shines as bright where I was born
And still around the children play.

'Twas there in those fast-flying hours,
'Mid other dreams now long forgot,
A love grew up by those old towers
Time's heavy hand shall alter not.

A maid sat on a mossy stone
Far in the olden golden time;
Nor was the maiden all alone,
A youth was there ere yet his prime

The air was sweet, the hour divine,
Or so they still appear to me,
And there I knelt at beauty's shrine,
As kneels the Eastern devotee

And then with all the fire of youth
My love to her I did appeal,
And she was silent, but the truth
Her downcast eyes did not conceal.

That heaving breast, that crimson cheek
Did tell again the old, old tale,
And we those few short words did speak
As softly sighed the ev'ning gale.

And mountains high may intervene—
No space has o'er remembrance sway—
And seas and oceans roll between,
And I afar for many a day;

Yet if I knew that one poor thought
Of thine is still bestowed on me,
I well could bear what time has brought,
And breast my fate's adversity.

Farewell! for my sweet dream is o'er;
And God be with those days and thee!
Shall be my prayer, oh, days of yore,
Till time shall meet eternity!

The Bouquet Girl;

OR,

HALF A MILLION DOLLARS.

BY AGILE PENNE,

AUTHOR OF "ORPHAN NELL," "STRANGE STORIES OF MANY LANDS," "THE DETECTIVE'S WARD," "WOLF OF ENHOVEN," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXVI.

ENTRAPPED.

PROMPTLY on the day appointed the Italian walked down Broadway to the lawyer's office. A peculiar look of distrust was upon his dark face; he was not at all easy in his mind; he did not put complete confidence in the lawyer and was very much inclined to think that Captain Jack would overreach him if he possibly could.

"But he will not do it, diavolo! no!" was the Italian's fierce thought. "I am not a child to be fooled with! No! And he shall discover that if he tries it. Bah! the game is in my hands; nothing can prevent me from winning, no power above, below or anywhere!"

But, despite this, it was plain the adventurer felt anything but confident. In his heart he was surely afraid the wily lawyer would be able to devise some plan to overreach him, and though he racked his brain to its utmost, he could not see how the thing could be done.

Standing just within the entrance of the palatial pile, where Leipper's office was situated, he rapidly, in his mind, scanned the battle-ground.

"If he accepts, good! I come forward and swear to the identity of the child. If he refuse, good again, for then am I left free to follow my own devices. Against my testimony she can get nothing; will he dare to try that? Bah! no! he would be one great fool for the sake of the leetle one hundred thousand dollairs to attempt to defy me. Diavolo! I cannot see one weak point in the whole case. Oh, no! he will not dare! he will yield! he will say, politely, 'My dear friend, rest tranquil! here is the one hundred thousand dollairs; we want your testimony; not for ten times one hundred thousand dollairs will we make an enemy of you! The matter is settled!'"

With a grand wave of his hand, at this happy conclusion, he stepped into the elevator and was rapidly borne skyward; and with a jaunty step and a face full of confidence, he marched into the lawyer's apartment.

Captain Jack, as usual, was at leisure; the man never seemed to have anything else to do but to read newspapers. The Modoc of the law always did his work during the night hours; like the beasts of prey, whom he resembled so much, by day he rested and by night he thrived.

He glanced up carelessly from his newspaper as the Italian entered, nodded and waved his hand toward a chair.

"Help yourself to a seat," he said; "the party hasn't arrived yet, but I expect him every minute."

The Italian had bowed in the dignified and elaborate manner peculiar to him upon entering the room, and after gathering the purport of the lawyer's speech, had bowed again, and proceeded to occupy the chair.

Captain Jack resumed the perusal of his paper and the Italian sat in silence, watching the gradual progress of the sunbeams advancing over the carpet, and ever and anon turning his eyes impatiently upon the face of the timepiece upon the mantle.

Twenty minutes passed—twenty minutes which seemed to the impatient Italian almost like so many hours. No sounds broke the stillness which reigned within the apartment but the ticking of the clock and the rustling of the lawyer's newspaper. The Italian fidgeted nervously in his chair. To his suspicious mind this delay boded no good. At last he could stand the suspense no longer."

"How think you?" he exclaimed, abruptly; "will he no come soon?"

"Oh, yes, he ought to have been here an hour ago," Captain Jack responded, just glancing up from his paper and immediately again resuming his reading.

The Italian drummed upon his knee for a few minutes with his long, skinny fingers, his dark face darker than ever; he was more uneasy in mind than even his nervous manner expressed.

Ten minutes more passed; the lawyer, busy with his newspaper, never even so much as cast a glance at his visitor. His visitor could restrain his impatience no longer.

"This gentleman—how do you a-call him? He will not come, I fear."

"Oh, yes, he'll come," the lawyer replied, carelessly; "no fear of that, although he ought to have been here an hour ago. He must have been detained. He is generally full of business and probably something of importance has occurred to delay him." And again Captain Jack turned to the newspaper, but the Italian could keep quiet no longer.

"Hah!" he exclaimed, abruptly; "how you call this gentleman you expect, eh?"

"Taxwill—Mortimer Taxwill; he is one of the executors of the estate."

"And why must I see *him*, eh?" The adventurer was suspicious.

"Simply because he holds the purse-strings; I couldn't give you a cent in the premises, without he was willing, no matter how important I thought the matter was."

The Italian stared blankly at the wall before him for a few moments; it was plain that he did not like the idea of conferring with this stranger, who, apparently, set little importance upon the appointment.

"Hah! I do not like it!" he cried, abruptly, for the suspicious soul of the adventurer now scented danger. "Why should I wait for this man who no hurries himself to see me, eh?"

"Well, you need not wait if you don't wish to," was the decidedly caustic reminder.

"Does he know the business upon which I come?"

"Oh, yes, I wrote him that you *said* you had some important evidence in regard to this lost heir."

"And yet he no come?" the adventurer demanded, in wonder.

"Why, the fact of the matter is, he don't care two cents about the heir either one way or the other," the captain explained. "He'd be glad to get the whole matter off his mind; it's only a bother to him."

"I shall not wait!" the Italian cried, jumping to his feet. "Diavolo! what have I to do with this man at all?"

"Haven't I told you that he has the entire control of the estate?"

"Yes, yes, but what is that to me? It is not with ze estate that I would deal; it is with ze heir; it is she that must pay me my hundred thousand dollairs; with me she will get ze property; without me she will get nothing; do you not see?" and the Italian's energetic manner was peculiarly fierce.

"Yes, but this gentleman has a most decided interest in the heir," the lawyer explained. "He is very anxious to have her get possession of the property, for then his responsibility will be ended. He is fully convinced that she is Francesca Vendotena, and will leave no means untried to prove it."

"I will not wait longer!" hissed the Italian, who now felt that he was in danger; some subtile instinct within his frame warned him that he was about to lose the game.

"Oh, you had better wait."

"No, no, I will not!"

"Well, write what you will do, then," the lawyer suggested.

"Oh, no!" retorted the adventurer, "me no write! me know better. You write—write what you like! You no catch me in a trap!"

"Aha! you're a cool hand—an old bird, eh?" laughed Captain Jack. "I fancy that a man must get up precious early to catch you napping!"

The Italian grinned; even a rogue is not averse to flattery.

"Well, I'll just make a memorandum; that won't commit you, you know."

"Oh, yes, I know," assented the schemer.

The lawyer produced memorandum-book and pencil, and proceeded to write:

"For the sum of one hundred thousand dollars, to you cash in hand paid, you will agree to come forward and swear that this Bouquet Girl is the lost heiress, Francesca Vendotena."

"Yes, that is correct; for one hundred thousand dollairs I will swear that she is the heir."

"But if the one hundred thousand dollars is refused?"

"If ze money is refused, then in ze open court will I rise up when you present ze girl and I will say, 'Most noble judge, you are a-deceived; this girl is an impostor!'"

"That is, if we pay you the money, you will swear on our side, and if we don't, you will go against us."

"That is it! You pay me, I am for you; you no pay, I am against you!"

The lawyer had apparently been noting this all down, but in reality not a stroke had he made. When the Italian finished, Captain Jack raised his head and called out:

"Have you got it all down, Mr. Thomas?"

And then the glass door behind the lawyer swung open and revealed that there had been two witnesses to this scene.

CHAPTER XXVII.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION.

DREARY enough is the approach to the little New Jersey settlement known as Branchburg, coming at it from Long Branch.

And the worthy private detective, tramping along through the hot sand in the full glare of the noonday sun mentally wondered what could induce any one to live in such a region who could possibly live anywhere else.

The road grew narrower and narrower, becoming at last only a cow-track through the scrubby fir trees, and the wild vines, the sole product of the barren soil.

"I must have taken a wrong turning somewhere," the detective muttered, "although they told me to go straight on, and straight on I've come, turning neither to the right nor left, to the best of my knowledge."

But this narrow path through the thick, scrubby timber seemed so unlike a highway that the detective, unused to the sand barrens, "the pines" of south-eastern New Jersey, felt sure that he had made some mistake and got into the wrong road, that is if such a miserable lane could be dignified with the title of road.

Pendalmock had come down from the city that morning and at Long Branch had inquired the way, and being informed that it was only a short distance had determined to walk over, being remarkably fond of pedestrian exercises, but when he encountered the sand he regretted that he had undertaken the task, and now apparently was lost in the wood.

Just as he had made up his mind to go back to the last house which he had passed—for during the last half-hour houses had been few and far between—he heard a dog barking in the wood before him.

"That signifies a human habitation," he muttered and so pushed on briskly.

Just around a turn in the road was a little clearing, and in its center a rude, unpainted house, more hut than cottage—stood.

One "native and to the manor born" would have instantly detected from the outward appearances that the owner of the place was no white "trucker," as the small New Jersey farmer generally is, and to the wandering stranger a small sign-board, rudely painted, stuck up on a tree by the roadside, bearing the inscription:

"WASHING & IRONING DONE HERE,"

no two of the letters alike, would have instantly suggested a descendant of Afric's burning clime.

"By Jove! I believe I've struck the place, after all!" Pendalmock exclaimed, as he marched up to the house.

A sneaking "yaller" dog, with open mouth, came rushing out from behind the shanty, seemingly on war intent, but the brandished cane of the detective awed the brute, while the noise attracted the attention of the owner of the shanty and a big, fat colored dame stuck her head out of the door.

"W'at's de matter wid you, Bose?" she queried, and then, catching sight of the portly figure of the well-dressed gentleman advancing toward the house she was quick to define the situation.

"We don't want anyt'ing, boss!" she cried with a shake of the head; "'fore de Lord, we ain't got no money; we got all we want; we don't know nuffin' 'bout sewing machines, an' we can't read, an' you can't sell us nuffin', nohow!"

The detective laughed; he saw that the woman was a character.

"You mistake the nature of my business, madam," he replied, bowing as politely as though he were addressing a duchess. "I haven't anything to sell, but I am in search of a certain party. Can you direct me to the house of Mrs. Elizabeth Johnson?"

The old woman looked astonished and for a moment she stared, open-mouthed, at the stranger; then suspicion took the place of astonishment.

"W'at's de matter—w'at does yer want wid her?" she asked.

"I merely wished to procure some information from her, that is all," the detective replied, urbanely; he had a suspicion that the colored dame was the party, for she exactly answered the description that he had received.

"Information—'bout what, boss? 'Fore de Lord! she dunno anyt'ing 'bout anybody."

"Oh, yes, she knows about this party. It's a young girl who used to live with Mr. Limowell, Miss Frank."

"By golly! I dunno whar she's gone!" the negress declared, abruptly.

"Oh, you are Mrs. Johnson, then?"

"How did you know dat, white man?" demanded the dame, rather inclined to be offended.

"Oh, I merely guessed it, that's all. But don't be alarmed about this inquiry. I don't wish to know where the lady now is; I know all about that. I come on behalf of friends of hers, who wish to learn some of the particulars of her early life."

"And you don't mean nuffin' bad to her?" the colored woman demanded, suspiciously.

"Oh, no; quite the contrary."

"An' you ain't got nuffin' to do wid dat ole scamp, Limowell?"

"Nothing at all."

"Well den, boss, I guess I kin tell you—dat is, ef it's gwine to do de leetle gal any good."

"I have reason to believe that your information will be of a great deal of value to her."

"Say, how did yer know dat I knowed anything 'bout her?" the negress importuned, the thought having, apparently, just occurred to her.

"The lady herself believed that you knew some important facts concerning her."

"Bress de chile! She allers believed dat I brought her to dis yere place, but it wasn't no sich t'ing."

"And do you know who did bring her?"

"Oh, yes, honey, 'deed I do!"

"And will you favor me with the information?"

"Yes, sah," replied the woman, promptly. "I've kept de hull t'ing jest as quiet as a mouse, but I ain't a-gwine to, any longer. If it will do de leetle gal good to know all 'bout it, I'se glad on it."

"Go ahead, and with your permission I'll just jot the facts down in my book as you relate them," Pendalmock said, producing his memorandum-book and pencil.

"Say, boss!" cried the old woman, suddenly, "dis hyer t'ing ain't gwine to get me into any trouble, is it?"

"Oh, no, not at all."

"By golly! I'm yer chicken, den."

"Who brought the child here?"

"An Irish woman, Biddy Hoolihan."

"Did she say that it was her child?"

"No, boss; she said dat it belonged to her sister. She kem an' stopped wid me, kase I knowed her in de city where we were boff servants in de same house. Arter a time she said she had to go back to New York, an' wanted me for to keep de chile, an' said she'd pay for it, an' she did, for a while, an' den stopped. Well, jest 'bout dat time I had a fuss wid a neighbor; she kem b'iling drunk an' trespassed upon my premises, an' called me names, an' I jest frowed her out an' she went an' swore out a warrant 'g'in' me to de squire for murderin' her, an' I jest had to trabble, an' I couldn't bodder wid de chile, an' I knowed Mrs. Limowell liked children an' hadn't any—she was alive den—so I jest put de chile in a basket an' luff it on dere stoop. Well, boss, I was away some time, an' when I 'em back de chile was growin' up right smart. I used fur to wash fur de Limowells, an' so I allers see'd de chile pretty often, an' when de leetle t'ing growed up she allers 'spicioned dat I knowed something 'bout her; but dat's all I do know, an' dat's de bressed trufe!"

"This Bridget Hoolihan—where can I find her?"

"At No. — Baxter street; dar's whar I sent de leetle gal when she run away from de ole debble."

"Oh, yes, I see." But the detective did not see, and he was rather perplexed.

"Yes, sah; boff de gals, when dey cut dar lucky come right to dere old aunty."

"There was another girl, then?"

"Yes, sah, and she was called Frank, too; she run off with a Mister Ronnells. I used to wash for him in de city."

The detective almost started. Here was a surprise with a vengeance.

"And do you know who Mr. Ronnells—James Ronnells really was?"

"Oh, I bet you, honey!" cried the negress, confidently.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

BAFFLED BUT NOT BEATEN.

WITH distended eyes the Italian gazed upon the unexpected sight; here was a surprise with a vengeance.

The glass door led into a little inner office; in the apartment were two men, one of them evidently a short-hand writer, as the note-book and pencil betrayed.

"You are quite sure that you have got it all down, Mr. Thomas?" the lawyer repeated.

"Oh, yes," replied the scribe, briskly, advancing into the room as he spoke; "every word, sir."

"This is Mr. Taxwill, one of the executors of the estate," Captain Jack said, with a smile that was "childlike and bland," and he waved his hand toward the other gentleman who had shared the ambush of the stenographer. "You perceive, Mr. Taxwill, how this gentleman stands in the matter. He is quite prepared to swear that black is white and that white is no color at all, provided he is well paid for it."

"Ah, yes, but I don't really think that we shall need his assistance at all," the executor replied, shortly.

The Italian fully realized the extent and completeness of the trap into which he had fallen, and yet so blind of vision was he, so angry in his impotent rage, that he attempted to bully and threaten.

"Aha! it is all very well, signors!" he cried, bristling up. "I would be friends with you, but since you will not have it so, goot! I am your foe! In ze court I will rise and speak some things which may make the most honorable judge open his eyes! Am I a worm to be trodden upon and no turn to bite the foot which crushes me?"

"I don't think that your testimony would be worth much," Taxwill observed, dryly, "considering that we hold in our hands your statement that for a certain sum of money you would be quite willing to swear to anything."

"Diavolo! it is all a lie!" the adventurer fairly shouted. "Behind the closed door you did not hear a-right—you misunderstood me! I will swear it on my oath! An honest man am I! plenty people will witness that I always a-speak ze truth!"

"Too thin!" remarked Captain Jack, quietly. "The fact is, old fellow, you might as well own up; you're beaten; you've played a pretty sharp game, but we got the best of it; so haul in your horns and draw off for repairs."

"Oh, yes, my man, that's correct; no use of attempting to frighten us," Taxwill observed, in his brisk, business-like way. "You tried to play a sharp game, but we have got the best of you, so you might as well own up. Any testimony that you might offer in a court of law in regard to this case, after your offer here, this morning, to Mr. Leipper, to testify either way, provided you were well paid for it, would be instantly rejected."

"Oho! I have a-lose ze game, eh?" cried the Italian, moving toward the door, a dark scowl upon his swarthy face and his eyes flashing angrily.

"Most decidedly!" the executor responded.

"Not a doubt of it!" added the lawyer.

And even the short-hand writer could not repress an affirmative nod, so cunningly had the Italian been entrapped.

"Aha!" and the adventurer paused in the open doorway and turned his angry face upon the chuckling trio; "we have a saying in my countree—Italy—'It is not wise to cry aloud until you are out of ze wood.' Another saying, too —'He laughs best who laughs last.' Ze game is not over yet, signors; keep your eyes open for my next play!"

And with the threat, for such it clearly was, the Italian disappeared.

Taxwill looked inquiringly at Leipper. "He threatens?" he said.

"Oh, an empty boast, that's all!" the lawyer replied, carelessly. "What can he do? We've spiked the only gun he had; he will not trouble us any more."

But the lawyer underrated the adventurer; the threat was not merely the vain boasting of a defeated man, for within his brain the Italian had concocted a truly infernal scheme.

No hundred thousand dollars could he get from the Bouquet-Girl heir; the wily device of the lawyer had knocked that idea "into a cocked hat;" but he was now free to carry out the compact which he had made with the blonde burlesque queen. He could carry off the heir, and so give the lawyer a Roland for his Oliver.

The heir in his custody—why, he could make his own terms, if he liked; but in his busy brain was a plan worth two of that.

His constant companion, the fat and greasy Italian who called himself Colonel Anselmo del Frascati, was his creature and could be depended upon to do exactly as he said. And after the Bouquet-Girl was abducted and safely hidden away from all the world, she could be easily forced into a marriage with the colonel; a renegade Italian priest was at this arch-conspirator's command, an utter scoundrel, forced to fly from his native land on account of numerous crimes, but still a priest, not having yet been unfrocked.

With the heir in his possession—married, too, to his creature, who could be relied upon to do exactly as he was bid—it was quite plain that the executors of the estate would be compelled to come to terms.

"Oh! and shall I not win?" the adventurer muttered, closing his fierce white teeth, as he marched up Broadway; "wait and see!"

For a wonder, the colonel had not accompanied his august friend, this time, and so the Italian proceeded directly to the dingy house on Crosby street, where the two had their quarters.

New York is becoming quite cosmopolitan of late years. It has its German quarter, its French quarter, its Hebrew quarter, its Irish quarter, its Italian quarter, its Chinese quarter, its negro quarter.

With the Italian we have now to do.

The keen-eyed observer who walks up Crosby street, turning into it from Howard, cannot fail to notice the Italian faces that ornament the doorways and windows.

A dozen little saloons are there, in the first three blocks, counting from Howard street, and each and every one thoroughly Italian; well patronized, too, to judge from the groups of swarthy-faced men, Italians of all Italy, usually to be seen seated at the small tables within, and generally engaged in playing dominoes.

The adventurer, knowing well where the noble colonel was to be found, proceeded to one of the small saloons in the middle of the block bounded by Broome and Spring streets, where the confederate was then deep in a game of dominoes, but when his patron put his head in at the door, the colonel excused himself to his companions and at once joined the adventurer.

In the face of his swarthy leader he read that all had not gone well.

"They refuse, hey?" he asked.

"They play a deep game; they laugh at me, diavolo! they defy me."

"That is a-bad," the other replied, in his stolid way.

The noble colonel did not trouble himself much with thought; the elder adventurer always did the thinking for both.

"There is nothing left for us but to carry away ze girl."

"Yes."

"And we must not let the grass grow under our feet."

"No, we must not," the colonel repeated, like an echo.

"It must be done to-night. You have seen about the carriage?"

"Yes; ten dollairs it will cost."

"It is dear."

"No less would Taddeo take; he know that it is for no good purpose we want it; he say, 'S'pose police catch you, then trouble will I have to get my own again.'"

"And what did you say?"

"I laugh and say, 'Police! what have we to do with police?' He say, 'I do not know, but it will be ten dollars, no less.'"

"Ah, well, we can a-pay it."

Before nightfall all needful arrangements had been made, and the conspirators waited but for the mantle of darkness to enable them to carry out their scheme. And when the city clocks struck nine, the plotters, with their coach, were on the ground, ready to abduct the unsuspecting girl.

(*To be continued—commenced in No. 387.*)

Adventures in the North-west.

BY MAJOR MAX MARTINE,

Formerly of the Hudson Bay Company's Service.

I.

A GAME OF CARDS FOR A LIFE.

IN my last I made the assertion that I had never killed but three Indians without a good excuse. I then told my readers about two of them, and will now tell them of the third.

He was a young Cheyenne chief, named Hoy-ko-la, who, with a party of braves, had taken the war-path into the Sioux country. I was then trapping on the Gray Bull river, a tributary of the Big Horn. There are two streams having their source near Yellowstone Lake, and running nearly east from the Gray Bull river, which empty into the Big Horn about one hundred and fifty miles below. I had been directed to this place by Louie Kelley, one of the best hunters in the world, and as good an Indian scout as exists in the north-west to-day. It is a place not often visited by white men, but is a perfect paradise for the hunter. Large flocks of swans and other water-fowl are there; otters in great numbers can be seen at any time performing the most amusing aquatic evolutions; mink and beaver swim around unscared, in most grotesque confusion. Deer, elk, and mountain-sheep would stand and stare at me, manifesting more surprise than fear at my presence among them.

It is a lovely spot, and I could not get lonely there, for the forest was vocal with the songs of birds, chief of which were the chattering notes of a species of mocking-bird, whose efforts to imitate everything else afforded abundant amusement for my leisure hours. Here I had made my camp, and was fast accumulating a store of rich furs, when this party of Cheyennes came across my traps.

That morning I had started out to examine my traps, not taking my pony, as I usually did. I had about half made the rounds, when I discovered "sign," and I was thinking that perhaps I had better get out of that, for I knew that the Indians who had discovered my traps would not rest content until they had found the owner, and in this conclusion I was correct.

I had examined my line of traps on one of the streams above mentioned, when I was obliged to cross over about a mile to reach the other stream where my traps were.

In making this crossing, I had to pass through a strip of timber, and here it was that I was surprised and taken prisoner. They then took the trail and soon found my camp, when my hands were unbound, and I was told to cook some venison for them; and having no choice I went to work as cheerfully as if they had been a party of friends on a visit; but there is no particular fun in cooking for seventy or eighty hungry Indians, as I found out before I was done.

All the time I was at work I kept talking with the chief, and deriding his bravery in taking one white man with the assistance of all his warriors. He took it all in good part, and joked me in return, offering to play a game of *monte* to see whether I should join his tribe or be roasted.

I had seen a little of that roasting business, and did not like to make myself the object of their very warm affection, so I assented to his proposition, and we were soon engaged in the game which was to decide my fate.

There is a strange fascination in a game of cards, not only for an Indian, but with the frontiersman as well, and upon the turn of a single card I have known them to stake the entire products of a hard winter's trapping, or wager their ponies, or wives, and sometimes their arms, those trusty rifles they would never part with in any other way. But I believe I was the first white man who ever made a wager of his life against *nothing*, in a game of cards with an Indian; and I went about the game as coolly as though I had been playing for a beaver-skin.

I thought there was not much to win or to lose; for if I won I was still a prisoner, and if I lost I was pretty sure they would not torture me, because I would be worth too much to them as an interpreter. I had learned the little game of *monte* years before in the wilds of Mexico, so, by good playing, good luck and some cheating, I won the game.

Simultaneously with the playing of the last card, a crashing was heard in the brush close by, and a huge bear came tearing out and rushed past the camp. Immediately every one of the Indians, with the exception of the chief, was in pursuit of the bear. My gun and knife lay on the ground beside the chief, and I was in a quandary how to get them. I waited until the Indians were out of hearing, when, for once in my life, I was struck by a happy thought. My horse! my noble, brave old Jim! I called him, and he came trotting up to me, and rubbed his nose against my face, glad to be with me again.

This horse was one that I had procured from a Sioux Indian, known at the forts along the upper Missouri as Big Jim. How he came to be in possession of him I never could imagine, for, from the hour I became his owner, no Indian could ever mount him. My horse, Jim, was the best friend I had in those days. His ears were slitted, the mark of a Comanche, and he must have been a king among some wild herd on the far away plains of Texas.

His eyes fairly snapped when he saw the Indian, and Hoy-ko-la's glistened with pleasure at the prospect of securing so fine a horse; and he arose, and going up to Jim's side, commenced patting him on the neck, which familiarity, for a wonder, was not resented. I did not know but that Jim had outgrown his hatred for the Indians; but not so, he was only "playing off."

While the chief was paying his attention to the horse, I had secured my rifle and knife; and turned just in time to see the chief spring upon Jim's back. He began kicking the horse's sides to make him go, when, like a flash, Jim lay down, and commenced rolling over. The chief was unable to extricate himself, so sudden had been the movement of the horse; but both were on their feet at the same time.

The chief picked up a club, and walking up to Jim was about to give him a beating, when Jim turned and gave him a kick that laid him senseless on his back.

This was the opportunity I had been waiting for, and mounting my horse I waited for the chief to recover his senses, which he did very soon. When he was upon his feet I laughed at him, and said:

"Good-by, Cheyenne, I guess I'll be going," and giving Jim the word, we were off.

I had gone but a few rods when a ball came whizzing past my ear, just close enough to make me mad, and turning in my saddle, I shot the Cheyenne dead!

But for the sagacity of my horse I should undoubtedly have been a prisoner among the Cheyennes, while, as it was, that war-party returned to their village in mourning, and probably swore eternal vengeance on all white men, myself in particular.

Once since the completion of the Pacific Railway, I was out on the Smoky Hill route, and there met some of the same party. Although ten years had passed away, one old fellow recognized me, and I presume if I had been alone, some one would have been hurt.

(*To be continued—commenced in No. 394.*)

ALL the world loves to talk about dreams. The streaks of insanity which a French philosopher declares run through every man's brain, show their edges in sleeping, if not in working hours, and as for the supernatural element, who is wholly without superstition in regard to dreams? Two English ladies were recently in attendance upon their brother, who was ill of common sore throat—severe and protracted, but not considered as dangerous. At the same time, one of them had borrowed a watch from a female friend, in consequence of her own being under repair. The watch was one to which particular value was attached, on account of family associations, and some anxiety was expressed that it might not meet with any injury. The sisters were sleeping together, in a room communicating with that of their brother, when the elder of them awoke in a state of great agitation; and having aroused the other, told her that she had had a most frightful dream. "I dreamed," she said "that Mary's watch stopped," and that, when I told you of the circumstances, you replied, "Much worse than that has happened, for James' breath has stopped also!"—naming their brother who was ill. To quiet her agitation, the younger sister immediately got up and found the brother sleeping quietly, and the watch which had been carefully put into a drawer going correctly. The following night the very same dream occurred, followed by similar agitation, which was again composed in the same manner: the brother being again found in a quiet sleep, and the watch going well. On the following morning, soon after the family breakfasted, one of the sisters was sitting by her brother, while the other was writing a note in the adjoining room. When her note was ready for sealing, she was proceeding to take out for the purpose the watch, which had been put in her writing desk, when she was astonished to find it had stopped; and at the same instant she heard a scream from her sister in the next room. Their brother had been seized with a sudden fit of suffocation, and had just breathed his last.

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Sunshine Papers.

Home Again.

—IF not from a foreign shore, at least from places that have filled our souls with joy at the mere thought of seeing our friends once more; friends in the shape of familiar rooms, and chairs, and furniture, and belongings generally, as well as familiar faces.

The glory of the summer has departed; the vacationist and the tourist no longer, with tears in their eyes, beseech pompous hosts for the privilege of stretching their metropolitan limbs upon a settee or a billiard-table; no longer do unprotected females, with some scores of traps, bent on a vacation, humbly present their greenbacks to the man who advertises "Commodious country board" and condescends to allow them to share a garret room, in his cottage, with half a dozen other women; no longer does the mother who spends the summer out of town on account of her delicate child, linger where there is a "fine river front" and no doctor within twelve miles; no longer do the "upper ton" vie with each other in attempts to get something decent to eat, and enough of it to keep from starving, at the fashionable barracks.

Yes, the glory of the summer has departed. The artist has folded up his easel, and his camp-stool, and his umbrella, and is unpacking his palette and his sketch-book in the coolness and seclusion and general comfortableness of his studio; the "amateur" young women have carried their pencils and paints back to their seminaries; gushing girls have put aside the short skirts of their mountain or sea-side suits and donned the more fashionable lengths suggestive of street-sweeping contracts; the clerks are trying to "roast" Western customers, "seeing a man," or agonizingly biting the ends of their beloved mustaches over ledgers and day-books; professional men have returned to their offices; and managing mammas with daughters who still "hang fire" are trying to economize over their fall shopping.

In fact, the world has taken its vacation, and returned to the wonted order of its ways; the leaves are lying in thick rustling piles where late the tourist trod, and the itinerant photographer has ceased to pitch his moving tent here and there about the country; the basket-weavers and the wood-carvers, the fishermen, and guides, and hawkers of small wares, have retired to comparative seclusion where they will invent new modes for fleecing next summer's travelers; the booths are shut, billiard-tables are taken apart to make room for country dancers, and hosts who have sighed over their poverty all summer and put their guests upon limited eggs, and milk, and towels, and candles, now gloat with delight over the season's proceeds.

And, now that we are home again, we draw long breaths of astonishment at thought of what we have endured, and of relief that once more we are amid the comforts of home. We think of all the funny things that have happened, the funny people we have met, and the funny places we have occupied, during our summer's absence, and marvel how it was that we endured them—still more how we enjoyed them; for it seems to us, now, that if we had not gone away we certainly could not, home is so nice; but that is only because we have had the experience. And, after all, perhaps the change of scene, and association, and air, has done us good. Brushing up against new phases of humanity rubs a little of the self-satisfied gloss off our own human natures. And the discomforts have done us no harm. By next year we shall be ready to go through with it all again—the packing, and traveling, and small rooms, and hard beds, and apologies for towels, and poor service, and—

But is it not really marvelous, when one does contemplate the subject seriously, how persons who have delightful homes, either in town or country, and all the advantages of commodious rooms, comfortable furniture, dark, clean, quiet parlors, all modern conveniences, careful cookery, unlimited choice of fresh fruit and vegetables, will cheerfully resign all these luxuries for a house crowded with strangers, rooms that would damage the historical cat were it swung in them, ugly crockery, pigmy towels, ends of soap, caricatures of mirrors that represent all parties as having crooked eyes and a nose that has gone contrary, frowsy, ill-natured, impudent chambermaids that, when wanted, are always down the back stairway flirting with the porter, snuffy ends of candles, tough meat, stale vegetables, no fruit, noisy children, multitudinous flies, to say nothing of *cimex lectularius* and other small fry. All for the sake of having it said they have been here or there, or to this or that hotel for the season?

But, bless us, my readers will think I owe some hotel-keeper a grudge, and want to injure the business! Not at all; and there always will be plenty of people who, instead of summering in some more romantic or sensible way, will just go away because it is a general form, and so continue to encourage the frauds so widely perpetrated upon summer boarders by the average hotel man; and to such, and to all, I extend a greeting sympathetic with the joy every one must feel at being home again.

A PARSON'S DAUGHTER.

WORSHIP OR SHOW?

"IT is the fashion nowadays to dress as much for church as for the opera, and any new bonnet or particularly elegant costume is usually reserved for a Sunday display."

I wonder if that is really the case? Is that a specimen of modern Christianity? Don't a certain good book say something about "Pride goeth before a fall?" Is this the meek and humble spirit we are taught to inculcate? Is it not downright wicked to carry this abominable pride of dress into the Lord's sanctuary? I'd like to occupy the pulpit for one Sunday where such a congregation was present. I rather think there'd be some expounding of the Scriptures and pounding of the pulpit cushion.

Don't I believe in dressing well for church? That's almost too nonsensical a question to answer, but I *will* answer it by stating that I *do* believe in dressing *well* for church, but there's a difference between goodness and gaudiness, and I never could see what good a person experienced from attending church just to show off their finery. I've been to the opera, and I've seen persons there who dressed in such a manner as to shock the good sense of many. I should not want to have dressed so (undressed so would be more appropriate), unless I wished to be talked about in a manner not very creditable to my sex. But, these persons were not performers on the stage. They were among the audience, holding high positions in the social world; their society was courted and they were considered as among the best. If they carried such a style of costume into church I might be inclined to tell some pretty plain truths were I to preach the sermon.

I am fond of the opera and I am fond of my church, but my fondness for each is of a different kind. I don't think one ought to dress so unbecomingly at the former or go too meanly clad at the latter. One goes to the former to see—and be seen, I grant you, but is it consistent with one's character, as a Christian, to go to church in all colors of the rainbow merely to see and be seen? Will you acknowledge you are such a heathen as to say you go *there* to be admired? It looks very much like it, indeed. Does God care for fine raiment and vain thoughts? No, no! It is the heart He looks at and when you go to *His* house, oh, carry a lowly heart with you and leave all pride at home.

If I am harsh in my remarks I am honest in the conviction that the occasion justifies it. Where thoughts are so much upon dress there can be little space left for religious thought, and you cannot convince me that Sunday was intended for a millinery display or the church for a show-room. I've been to churches where everybody turned around to see everybody else as they entered, to see what they had on. I've been to others, where the Queen of England might have entered clad in silver and gold, and not a head would be turned. I have my own idea which congregation was ready to sing,

"Nearer, my God, to Thee."

How would the following remark fit some persons' character? "Henry, I am going to church to-day to see what Thompson's wife has on. If I find she's dressed better than I am, I'll never let you rest until you get me something that will eclipse her, or I'll never go to church again." People *do* give utterance to just such thoughts; and others—just as much to blame—would *like* to give utterance to them if they only dared to. But, they don't dare to, but they think so, and grow perfectly miserable to themselves and all around them.

What's that you remark? I don't believe in one's following the fashion—that I want every one to go about looking like a dowdy, as I probably do myself?

Let us see. Isn't there a medium in all things? can't one "follow the fashion" without rushing away ahead of it or lagging three miles behind it? There are extremes to every case and these extremes are what cause the trouble. It is no more appropriate for you to sing a lively ditty at a funeral than it is for you to overdress yourself at church. I don't hear so much concerning this matter in other countries, but, maybe, they haven't an Eve Lawless to note and comment on their actions. "For which they have much to be thankful," you add. I sincerely agree with you there!

EVE LAWLESS.

Foolscap Papers.

Agricultural Discouragements.

MY farm has not paid this year, and I am afraid I won't either. I am a ruined man. Disaster stares me cross-eyedly in the face, and it is impossible for me to put on a hard cheek and look it out of countenance.

I wanted to be an honest farmer, this year, but, owing to the force of circumstances, alas, I am only the farmer.

Nothing has turned out well this year, not even the cows which I turned out of my fields, and my barn is not full, but my heart is. I even failed to raise hopes, and I have not even been able to cultivate the most respectable acquaintances.

My watermelons I planted in pumpkin time, and my pumpkins I planted in watermelon time, and the consequence was that my pumpkins turned out to be watermelons, and the watermelons pumpkins; the watermelons were planted in the light of the moon, and so the boys came in the dark of the moon, and I didn't have the luxury of shooting the smallest boy.

Acres of cabbages I planted when the sign was in the feet, and of course the cabbage all went to feet, and not a single cabbage was able to raise a head; they were early cabbages, too, and caught the early worm.

My wheat I drilled in the very latest manual of arms, but it showed heads with no more sign of beards than a boy's, and there was no use for a barber in my whole wheat field. Not many of its grains did it take to make me scruple, when I felt disposed to take a drachm.

I planted my corn in cucumber time. I made a dreadful mistake there, for the husks all contained cucumbers, and as there was but little market for them I lost on them heavily, and I am willing to acknowledge the corn—or the cucumbers—that I lost more money by that than would ever begin to pay the interest on my debts.

I put the patent fertilizer on some of my fields, and the decaying stumps got such a start in life that they all began to grow, and such fields of stumps you never saw. There was not room for anything else to grow, and when I looked around I felt completely stumped. I could easily stump the State.

It looked very much like I had planted my potatoes in weed time, and that weeds had come up instead; the greatest trouble of it was that no potatoes grew on the weeds. All the potatoes I raised hadn't eyes enough about their persons to see how little I made on the crop.

The only things which thrived on the whole farm were my neighbors' pigs, and they are in an excellent condition, and the price of pork is well up—but I don't expect even a cent of per cent.

I had a great many sheep, but it was a warm summer and they objected to wearing much woolen clothes; in fact, they did not seem to wear any at all, and I have not wool enough, except what is drawn over my eyes, to take to market; so I naturally feel very sheepish, and if somebody should lamb me over the head, I should take it very lamb-likely.

About the only things which got well sprouted on my farm this year were my boys.

Everything seemed to be against success in agriculture this year; it took 128 feet to make a cord of wood, and a half a cord put on the wagon at the farm no more grows to be a cord when you get to town. This is very discouraging when a man is honestly trying to do the best he can—no matter how he does it.

Lightning-rod agents have been very thick, and as I am a man open to conviction, here I have been persuaded to see the necessity of having rods not only on all my buildings and sheds and pens, but on my fence-posts, and even the trees on the farm; these have cost me all the money I have not made. I have even been induced to buy some to lay away, in case of future need—these lightning-rod men are *so* eloquent, and I never could stand much of it.

I subscribe to all the agricultural periodicals, and as I could not find time to work while reading them, I could not pay the necessary attention to the farm; but there is nothing like being well-posted, as the fellow observed late at night while holding up a lamp-post to keep it from falling over on the passers-by.

I dealt largely with a fruit-tree man and set out a vast quantity of fruit-trees, but by great mistake in the labels, or the unfitness of the season, the fruit turned out different from what was expected. The fruit-tree man was an honest man, because he took the utmost pains to assure me of the fact.

I went largely into the Osage orange business with a prospect of a large fortune if oranges kept so high, but there must have been a mistake in the variety of the fruit.

Next year I shall plant more shade-trees in my fields, so it will be easier to work in them, and it won't take me so long to go over so far to get under one.

When I mowed my oat field I had a tolerable good crop of hay as there was so much grass in it, but hay was worth but little.

Owing to the stringency of the times my hens got to laying eggs so small that I could not sell them by the dozen, and since people are getting so smart and so nice they make some kind of distinction between good eggs and bad ones. I have not made so much money off of my poultry as I need. Then, even after I have gone to all the trouble to cut the spurs off of last year's chickens and trim their feathers, I can't sell them for this year's chickens. I don't know what honest farming is going to come to if things keep on this way.

Why, if a stone happens to fall into the churn and get mixed up with the butter, grocery-keepers have got to deducting the weight of it, and people object to buying my milk because I happen to keep my crocks sitting in damp places, and they gather a little moisture, just as if it hurt the milk to get a little wet.

I bring apples to market. The worst of everything always settles to the bottom of the measure, and the best rises to the top; that is the way with my apples, and people growl even at that, and I very often come across people who insist—actually insist that I *heap* the measure when I sell them anything. Farming will never pay that way. The town-folks practice so much extortion on us.

Suppose I deliver a gallon of peach-butter with some apple-butter in it, a mistake which very often happens, they complain of it!

We have sold a good deal of butter this season, and when people would find out that some of it needed correcting, they have even had the impoliteness to say something about it. This is not a polite generation, and a man who owns a farm is the one to find it all out.

If my wood happens to be short, they will growl about it long, just as if I made the wood. If my cabbages are small, they will bluster to me big.

Farming has got to be a poor business, especially where you are honest enough to try to serve everybody alike.

Now, Mr. Editor, I wish you would insert the inclosed notice, as I want to quit the business. I send you the money to pay for it:

FOR SALE—A fine farm. The land is so rich that beside it the owner feels poor. Two crops of every thing grow on it each year. On it with a horse and small derrick a man can raise a thousand bushels of wheat—ten feet high. Seed sprouts before it gets into the ground. As there are no weeds nothing needs hoeing. Reason for selling, the proprietor don't know what to do with the income, and he don't wish to start a bank. Price, $10,000. One-half down, the other half immediately.

Address, WASHINGTON WHITEHORN.

STARTING IN THE WORLD.—Many an unwise parent labors hard and lives sparingly all his life for the purpose of leaving enough to give his children a start in the world, as it is called. Setting a young man afloat with money left him by his relatives is like tying bladders under the arms of one who cannot swim; ten chances to one he will lose his bladders and go to the bottom. Teach him to swim and he will never need bladders. Give your child a sound education and you have done enough for him.

Topics of the Time.

—The rice crop of Louisiana increased from 20,000 barrels in 1866 to over 175,000 in 1876. The yield for this year is estimated by the New Orleans *Democrat* at nearly 170,000 barrels, on a decreased acreage.

—Matches will ignite spontaneously. In one of the largest dry goods stores in Hartford the matches are kept in a stone jar, and twice the contents of the jar have been found consumed by fire. There was no opportunity for rats to get at the matches in this case.

—Professor David Swing does not believe in boys furtively playing cards in the woodshed, or behind locked doors, but thinks that the father of the family should put a card-table in the sitting-room and take a hand at whist with them. "Each home should have its games as regularly as its food or sleep."

—The Edenton (N. C.) *Times* has this shark story: "A citizen of Dare county told us a day or two since that one day last fall he made a haul with his seine in the ocean, and caught 102 sharks. The seine was only 280 yards long, and he says that twice as many sharks got away as he landed." That was a bad day for sharks.

—John Keely, the motor man, has acquired an immense fortune, dresses well, eats spring chickens, and is said to own $100,000 worth of diamonds. Which must be interesting news to those who paid seven hundred and fifty dollars for a hundred-dollar stock share in his Motor Company. Keely ought now to "invent" something else. Promises to make something out of nothing are popular just now.

—In France they estimate the daily consumption of bread at two pounds and a quarter per person, while in England it is not quite thirteen ounces. In England beer takes the place of bread, to a considerable extent. The consumption of beer and ale throughout all Great Britain is something frightful to the temperance reformers.

—More wild bears than ever have been known since the swamps have been settled by white men are reported to inhabit the bottoms of the Mississippi Valley this year. Old Davy Crockett's descendants must have died off in that section. Davy used to bag his half-dozen bears a day. Is it to be inferred that there are no more Davy Crocketts in West Tennessee?

—One of the largest women in the world, Fannie Wallace, died last week, at Ephrata, Lancaster county, Pa. She was fifty-four years old, seven feet four inches in hight, and weighed 585 pounds. Her coffin was seven feet four inches in length, three feet six inches in depth, and two feet wide at the foot. It required eight men, with block and tackle, to lower her into the grave.

—Mr. Sheford pre-exempted 160 acres of land in Uences county, Texas, in 1861, and started a sheep ranch. He has now 60,000 acres, and is worth over $200,000. Go to Texas, young man—go to Texas! But make your will before you go, for if land is cheap and sheep are cheaper, human life is cheaper than all if "the papers" tell the truth, and the papers are *so* reliable, you know.

—A young woman in the business in Philadelphia, says, that many of the ballet girls are married women, having children, and many of them are years older than they look in the glare of the dazzling calcium light. Some are country girls who have run away from comfortable homes; while again you may find a few honest girls, who have adopted the life to work their way up to distinction in it.

—A man in Chattanooga has a genuine pearl, which was taken with five others of various sizes from a muscle from the Tennessee river, near that city. It is very lustrous, and appears to be of good quality. The poor persecuted New Jersey clam must have emigrated to Tennessee. A few years ago he rested in peace in the shallow streams of all East Jersey; but, alas! the remorseless pearl-hunter got after him, and his dissevered halves lined all the door-yards. He was robbed of *genuine pearls* to a large amount. Then he disappeared to be known no more in Jersey waters. Where he went to no one knows, but now we hear from him again. Look out for another clam crusade!

—M. Victor Hugo appears to have pronounced opinions on the subject of "Woman's Rights." He says in a recent letter: "Courage, alas! he must have who will be just toward the weaker. The weaker is woman. Our ill-balanced society seems as if it would take from her all that Nature has endowed her with. In our codes there is something to recast. It is what I call the 'woman law.' Man has his law; he has made it for himself. Woman has only the law of man. Woman is civilly a minor and morally a slave. Her education is imbued with this twofold character of inferiority. Hence many sufferings to her which man must also justly share. There must be reform, and it will be to the benefit of civilization, truth and light."

—Who bids? What impecunious son of a hard-hearted parent, who won't support his own flesh and blood in luxurious idleness, can refuse the offer of a beautiful young gipsy wife with twenty thousand dollars to bind the match? We are told by a Wisconsin paper of a band of vagabonds whose chief has a daughter of nineteen years, who is of surprising loveliness, a queen among queens, said to be the most beautiful woman in the country, combining healthful Anglo-Saxon blood and Italy's warm nature! This chief, it is said, has tired of his nomadic manner of living, and will give the hand of his daughter and $20,000 to any young man with proper credentials as to morality and standing in social life, who will marry this beautiful queen!

—Miss Maud Howe saw the Prince of Wales at a garden party, and describes him as a very good-natured looking young man, stout, and with light blue eyes. The Princess Louise, a pretty, well-dressed lady, was on his arm. "The prince sat for a few minutes, then rose, and giving his arm to the princess, they walked along, speaking to every one they knew. The prince shook hands with several ladies as he passed them, and they all curtesied as he took their hands. I was standing quite near him, talking with Mrs. ——, when her little girl, a child four years old, suddenly broke away, and ran to pick some daisies. On her way back, as if suddenly realizing her proximity to her royal liege, she fell flat on her face, directly in front of him, not four feet away, as if making a salaam. The prince gave a little start, as if to run forward and pick her up; but Mr. —— ——, who was with us, caught her up and brought her back again. It was the merest accident, but quite interesting—he seemed so amused and pleased with the little thing."

—Snake stories are now in order provided they are big enough. This from the Grand Rapids (Mich.) *Eagle* will answer:—A blue-racer, twenty feet, eight and three-fourths inches in length, and ten inches in circumference in the largest place, was killed in the southwestern part of the township of Cannon by a citizen of good repute. He had a terrible encounter with it. On going from his work to a neighboring spring to get a drink of water he saw the grass wave a few rods from him, when lo! the blue devil came toward him with lightning velocity and head uplifted about three or four feet high from the ground. When within about ten feet from the man he halted, as if to look his prey over. He ventured nearer and nearer, and finally attacked the man. The snake twined itself several times around the man's legs, and felled him to the ground. The man took his knife out of his pocket, and with a few desperate strokes completely severed the monster's head from its body. It had previously been hurt, or it probably would have crushed the man, there being a large bunch on its side. Since then the man's hair has turned gray. All of which would have been credible had the man's hair turned blue. We are now inclined to think that snake was all in his boots.

Readers and Contributors.

Accepted: "The Old Life and the New;" Poems by A. W. B.; "Good-by;" "Won't You Let," etc.; "Schuyler's Toughs;" "Chased by Liquid Fire;" "A Strange Duel;" "Haunted;" "A Love Letter."

Declined: "Sunset;" "Deane's Reformation;" "Sweet By and By;" "Helen's Expressman;" "A Lost Hour;" "Past and Present;" "The Sister of Charity's Scholar;" "Two Lips" (Tulips); "Sans Merci;" "A Queer Arrangement;" "Mary O'Lally;" "The Tribute Paid."

Authors must give us their own correct name and address as a surety of authenticity. Communications which come in so unauthenticated we do not care to receive. A *nom de plume* may be attached to the contribution, but we must have the author's own name in full, for our own guidance.

J. D. E. Have not the birth records of the persons named. The first two are now in the prime of life.

B. R. A. Cannot "give reasons;" nor spare the time to correct or indicate defects in contributions. That is a teacher's work.

ROYAL NIBS. If you think the lady desires your acquaintance you are at liberty to lift your hat politely as she passes If she recognizes you by a return bow you can write her a polite note. Knowing you as she does this course is permissible.

L. A. L. If you have not received the revolver, as per promise in advertisement, we would advise to send no money to the professed "successors," but to lay the matter before the chief of Chicago police for investigation.

MRS. SARA N. The charges made by the "dyeing and cleaning" establishment are simply outrageous. Four dollars to dye the pieces of a silk sack-cloak is *not* an "honest charge." Do not pay it. Black is the cheapest of all dyes. Learn from this experience to deal with these establishments very cautiously.

CÆSAR. We presume it *is* true that the Suez canal has lowered the waters of the Mediterranean three and one half inches. As the Pacific Ocean is nearly *seven* inches higher than the Atlantic an open water-course over the Isthmus of Panama would be a rapid river, and result in seriously affecting the globe's present equilibrium, in time.

CHEYENNE BOY. Andrew Jackson was born in South Carolina, March 16, 1767. In 1788 he went to Tennessee. In 1796 he was elected to Congress; in 1797 to the Senate. In 1812 he entered the army in the war with Great Britain. He fought the battle of New Orleans January 8, 1815. In 1828 he was elected President, and re-elected in 1832. He died June 8, 1845, aged 78.

EDDIE G. WILLIS. Try this method of preserving flowers. Cut handsome ones for a bouquet and immediately dip the stems in limpid gum-water. Drain two or three minutes and then arrange in a vase. They will last a long time. The latest method for preserving autumn leaves is to dip them swiftly in fine, white melted wax and immediately after plunge in ice-water.

YOUNG BACH. complains that he is getting bald, though he is scarcely thirty, and asks if we know of any remedy. Morning and night plunge the head in cold water, rub well, dry thoroughly, and then brush briskly for some minutes. Do not wear a hat more than you can possibly help. Make a lotion of cologne and rose-water, an ounce each, and half an ounce of vinegar of cantharides. Rub this upon the scalp frequently, where the hair is thinnest.

CONSTANT READER, Auburn. Russia is an autocracy—that is, the czar has absolute authority. The emperor of Germany has *not* absolute power. A legislature elected by the people holds the nation's purse-strings and makes its laws; hence the empire is really a limited monarchy. France is governed by a nondescript—neither emperor, king, nor president; nor has its national assembly any real authority. A great change is impending there—probably through revolution, violence and blood.

DOMBEY AND SON. Cider vinegar can only be made from cider. The "cider vinegar" of the corner grocery is usually a decoction of sulphuric acid, and destructive of all pickles. A cheap and wholesome vinegar may be made of water, molasses and yeast, say twenty-five gallons of water, four of molasses and one of yeast. This, when it ferments, will yield very good vinegar. A fair imitation of white wine vinegar may be made of mashed raisins and water kept in a warm place for a month.

E. J. N. Health before all else. A teacher's work tells on the nervous system severely and that is why so many break down. Ordinary "tonics" do no permanent good where the drain on the nerves is so incessant. The course suggested by the physician and proven in the lady's own experience, is admirable if the conditions are available. As they are so in your case it would be easy to test the treatment.

EDWARD B. S. The best soap to use upon the face is the English brown Windsor; carbolic soap is excellent to use upon rough or eruptive skin. Do not use violet powder upon your face after shaving. Corn-starch, perfumed with orris-root, is perfectly harmless.—A man's breath smelling of cloves or coffee-beans is vulgar and suggestive of bad habits. A better perfume is made from chlorate of lime, seven drachms; vanilla sugar three drachms; gum arabic, five drachms. Mix with warm water to a stiff paste, and cut into lozenges.

MISS L. M. writes: "I have been much disappointed in my expectations to take a summer trip, but poverty is a hard thing to get rid of so I must do the best I can. I have a gentleman friend who is willing to take me on little trips around, a day or two at a time. I'd like dearly to go on these trips, but mother seems to think it isn't entirely proper, although she thinks highly of the gentleman as I do, and says she'd trust a lady with him anywhere. What do you think would be proper for me: to stay home or to accept his offer which is very kindly meant?" We see no reason why you should not accept his kindness and take an occasional little trip to pleasant places near home with him. You can at least take long day trips, starting on your tour early and returning in the evening, so avoiding staying from home over night.

LAURA FAIR asks: "What is the meaning of the maxim, "Honi soit qui mal y pense?" What language is it? What is the meaning of 'Mizpah,' and what language is it? Is there anything that will darken eyebrows and lashes without injury? What will cure bunions?" *Honi soit qui mal y pense*, is a French proverb meaning Evil be to him that evil thinks.—*Mizpah* is a Hebrew word: "Therefore was the name of it called Galeed, and *Mizpah;* for he said, *The Lord watch between me and thee when we are absent one from another.*—Gen., xxxi, 49. Mizpah, signifying the sentence italicized, is often used on gifts given by sweethearts.—To color your eyebrows and lashes, steep walnut bark, for a week, in cologne; it will give you a very nice transient dye; apply delicately with a brush each day.—Turpentine will cure bunions.

MISS J. M. WYLIE asks: "Do you consider Irene a pretty name? What does it mean, and has it any particular nationality? How can I raise hyacinths so that they will bloom indoors? How can brass ornaments be best cleaned?" Irene is a beautiful Greek name. She was one of the seasons—Horæ—and presided over winter. The meaning commonly given to the name is a rainbow.—Put hyacinth bulbs in glasses that come for that purpose and fill glasses with water until it reaches to within one inch of the bulb. Set them in a dark closet until the bulbs sprout and the roots reach the water; then fill up the glasses with water, add a piece of charcoal to each and set on a sunny window ledge to grow.—Dissolve two ounces of rock alum in a quart of water. Wash brass ornaments in this lye, dry and rub with leather and fine tripoli.

DECORATOR. September or early in October is the proper time for gathering wild clematis vine. After gathering your garlands, strip of leaves and fling over pictures, arches, chandeliers, easels, cornices, etc. The delicate little white balls will last throughout the winter months. Berries and bitter-sweet need a touch of frost before gathering. Cut the largest thistles you can find, while in full flower. Pull out the purple bloom, carefully remove the green calyx, and hang up to dry. They will burst into exquisite, downy white balls that are beautiful for vases, brackets and baskets. Milk-weed pods should be gathered when quite brown and nearly ready for bursting. When opened they are charming additions to winter bouquets and trimmings. Grasses and ferns are available to gather throughout September and October, so long as the frost spares them.

"SWEET NINETEEN" writes: "I have met several gentlemen that I did admire, and was much attached to, but we've been in straitened circumstances and I've not had much chance to go out, nor to dress, and consequently I've been neglected; so the present don't appear very encouraging to me. My brother is good to me, but somehow he don't take to me as he used to, and as my papa does not notice me, except to keep saying *no* to everything, I am downhearted enough to cry most every day. That's all I have to say." As no question is asked no answer probably is expected, but we venture a few suggestions. Don't put too much stress on dress, and *don't put yourself* in the background as so many over-sensitive girls do who imagine they are neglected. Be both hopeful and sprightly, and let not the unpleasant *no* repress your spirits. Enjoy your friends and company when you can, and especially your brother's company; try and *make* him "take to" you, and we dare say you'll have a happy winter of it.

☞ *Unanswered questions on hand will appear next week.*

A CONFESSION.

BY. A. W. BELLAW.

When I left you on the shore
  I kissed you on the cheek,
And that cheek was flooded o'er
  Till it would not let you speak;
And the pain that did impel
  Love's latest offered sigh
Made me say to you "farewell!"
  When I only meant *good-by*.

And when far out to sea
  The sails blew cheerly on,
And my heart hung mute in me
  And my little purpose gone.
I watched the blue waves swell
  With landward drifting eye,
And I wept for that farewell
  Which should have been good-by.

We parted not for long,
  But I thought of what might be—
Of the things that come in wrong
  And the days we could not see;
Yet I knew what e'er befell
  That God was always nigh.
But when I said "farewell!"
  I only meant *good-by!*

Clyde Clifford's Azaleas.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

Isabel Dunleath smiled contentedly back at the beautiful reflection in the glass.

"Oh, how pretty I am! and how glad I am that I am so pretty! What nonsense for people to say girls ought not to know, or care for their beauty—only I do wonder if Mr. Clifford has—has ever—noticed—thought—that I was —nice?"

As if Clyde Clifford, or any mortal man could have helped noticing the girl's sweet bewitching loveliness of face, and perfect grace of manner, and exquisite perfection of form—least of all, Clyde Clifford, with his ardent admiration of women's beauty, his delight in women's society.

He was a handsome fellow himself—a tall, big fellow, with nothing effeminate in manner or appearance, yet instinct with gentle, chivalrous tenderness so far as women were concerned, and, as far as Isabel Dunleath was concerned, very friendly, very admiring, very devoted when special occasion conveniently offered, and yet sufficiently reserved to have made the girl value him all the more highly, and esteem him all the more eagerly.

There was a vast difference in their positions socially so far as wealth went, for Miss Dunleath was an heiress of the *creme de la creme* of the aristocracy, the only child of her indulgent, widowed mother, the loving tyrant in her beautiful home; while Clyde Clifford was a musical artist, dependent upon his salary as church organist for his daily bread—and on that salary he bought not only very nice bread, but dressed himself *a la mode*, and wore *boutonnieres*, and had a fair amount of pocket-money.

For he was no ordinary musician. He was an artist who could command audiences at so much a head, any time he chose to give a musical rehearsal. He was a gentleman by birth and education, fitted to take his position anywhere and grace it well; and yet, there were people in the Dunleaths' set of society, who, even while they recognized his admissible qualities, thought it rather presumptive in him to be on such apparently friendly terms with the greatest family among them—the Dunleaths.

Only Isabel, knowing his friendly intercourse with her and her mother was simply friendliness and nothing else, was piqued both at what people said, and at what Mr. Clifford did; for, in her very heart of hearts she had come to care more for him than she would have dared tell. Not that she would have let any one, least of all, him, suspect it, of all the world; and yet, womanlike, she made up her mind to give him every chance to win the affections he could so easily have had for the asking.

And when Isabel made up her mind to accomplish an object, she usually succeeded. And in this instance, she discovered how exceedingly rusty she was becoming in her music, and how exceedingly natural that she should have Mr. Clyde Clifford give her a friendly, yet professional course of instruction.

It threw them very much together, and the two or three times a week that the two spent their lesson hour together came to be very pleasant to both of them—came to be little bits of Paradise dropped down to the girl who, while she worshiped him gave not the slightest sign, for she was proud and reticent on such a subject, as true girls are.

And Mr. Clifford? Well, it was certainly pleasant to see Isabel's lovely, radiant face, and look in her bright blue eyes, and watch her dainty fingers flash over the pearl keys of the Steinway grand. He liked to see the exquisite suppleness and grace of her form, the royal poise of her golden-haired head, the fleeting blushes on her cheeks; and when, almost every day, she gave him some tiny spray of flower—usually a delicate pink azalea, because it was her favorite flower—he would take it and thank her, and look at her a moment with his handsome, expressive eyes, and tenderly, as if he loved the flower for the giver's sake, fasten it in his coat, and then say "Good-morning," and go away, leaving Isabel in that delightfully ecstatic state of half-positive assurance, half-doubtful uncertainty that never comes so fully as at such times.

Only—there are ever such bitter drops in the sweetest cups—only, the days and weeks passed, and Mr. Clifford said nothing more than all the world might have heard. Yet he wore Isabel's flowers, and continued her lessons, and the girl dreamed alternate dreams of sweet hope and trembling doubt until one day when she drove in her elegant little phaeton down to her dressmaker's.

And then came astonishment, and anger, and jealous pain, and perfect desolation; for, fastened at the snowy lisse ruffle at Bessie Harman's throat, nestled among the glossy, jetty braids of her hair, were azalea flowers—and not only azalea flowers, but the very ones Isabel had cut with her own hand and given to the man she loved.

And Bessie Harman was poor, and a dressmaker, and not even pretty, with her pale, thoughtful face, and large, light eyes, and slim, angular figure.

Poor, and a dressmaker; and homely, and yet—for her, Clyde Clifford had been indifferent to all the attractions Isabel had been offering him.

He loved Bessie Harman, then. And she, beautiful, rich, desirable, was as nothing in his estimation! Then she remembered how he had looked at her, time and again, and she grew fearfully angry. She recalled how those looks had thrilled her very soul, and she became heart-sick with jealous pain, until she so hated the quiet, pallid little woman who was fitting her dress, that the temptation was almost unendurable to strike her down. Instead, she began to probe her own wound.

"What pretty flowers you are wearing," she said, sweetly. "Azaleas, aren't they?"

"Yes, azaleas. Aren't they lovely? I have them quite often, and I think I love them better than any flower that grows."

Isabel almost clenched her fists in Miss Harman's face.

"Perhaps you value them according to the law of association? Possibly for the giver's sake you love them?"

Just a faint crimson crept to Miss Harman's cheeks.

"Well—yes—perhaps. They certainly never would find their way to me unless as a gift, for I could not afford to buy them. As dear gifts from a dearer friend, I certainly appreciate them."

Isabel was settling her hat before the long glass, and she saw the paleness on her face.

"I was just trying to recall where I had seen such pink azaleas. I am almost sure I saw some one—Mr. Remington, Dr. Halland, Mr. Clifford—*some* gentleman, with them in his buttonhole."

Miss Harman flushed again at mention of the last name; but she answered, very quietly:

"Mr. Clyde Clifford brought them to me; he is very kind."

It went like a dart through Isabel's heart. He had given her gift to another woman—he, the man she had so tried, in her sweet, gracious, womanly way, to win. It touched her with an agony that she could hardly restrain; but, somehow, she managed to get away from the presence of the woman for whom *she*, in all her glory, and flush of budding womanhood, in all her royal dawn of grace and beauty, was accounted as air in the balance—somehow she got away from the hateful sight of the pink azaleas without giving a sign of what had happened to her.

For she realized at once what a terrible thing had happened. How that, at one sudden blow, hope and confidence and joy had gone out of her young life, and bitter woe and the misery of desolation had usurped their places. She realized, so keenly, what a sunshine in her path Clyde Clifford had been; and now, how alarmingly sudden the blackness of darkness had spread over everything.

But yet, could she justly censure him? True, he had taken her flowers; but could he have refused? True, he had looked very kindly upon her, but had not other men?

He had said no word, made no especial sign; it was she, poor foolish, silly creature, that had brought it upon herself, and she only had the pain of punishment to bear.

After that Mrs. Dunleath took it suddenly in her head that she and Isabel must go abroad.

Of course that abruptly broke off everything—lessons, interviews, everything between Isabel and Mr. Clifford, and she said her adieus as calmly as if nothing had ever happened her—only suffering one sharp glance of indignation and contempt to dart into her eyes at the very last moment, when, as he took her passive hand to say good-by, he gently pressed it, as he looked at her with one of those deep, earnest looks that once had been such pleasure to her to meet.

Instantly he released her hand. Immediately he took his leave, and the separation began that lasted two years. And then the Dunleaths, away off in sunny-skied Italy, heard the news, months after it happened, that Miss Harman, the plain little dressmaker, and Clyde Clifford, were married, and the pair had left the town, to take up their abode elsewhere.

It hurt Isabel more than she had imagined it possible a wound inflicted by human hands could have hurt. She thought of it continually, until, with the full realization that the one man she had loved was absolutely lost to her forever, Isabel learned that she had passed the possibility of ever creating a fancy for another, until she knew that she had secretly hoped against hope all those months, secretly temporized with pride and indignation and jealousy, only to learn, at the very last, that which she had known at the first, that Clyde Clifford had never cared for her the value of a straw—as love was estimated.

It was a year after the positive news of Mr. Clifford's marriage before Mrs. Dunleath saw fit to set her face homeward by such slow, easy changes that it was nearly six months later when, stepping off the cars that had brought them to their quiet village home, Isabel and Clyde Clifford came directly upon each other.

He was handsome, indifferent, graceful as ever, as he bowed and gave her his hand.

"Miss Dunleath! This is a most unexpected and delightful pleasure!"

And Isabel smiled, and let her hand rest in his just long enough to convince him, if conviction he needed, that they met entirely as indifferent, pleasant acquaintances meet—just long enough to convince herself that they had met—a renewal of her old woe.

But not a sign escaped her, not the faintest, smallest sign.

"A very unexpected pleasure, Mr. Clifford. We had heard you were not living here any longer."

He looked somewhat surprised.

"Not living here? I cannot imagine how you could have been told that— Oh! perhaps it was my cousin, and namesake, who was married lately to Miss Harman, to whom reference was made."

Earth, sky, railroad train and people suddenly seemed to begin the most insane dance around her. Her mother, fully acquainted with all her girl's hopes and fears, came quickly to the rescue.

"We certainly supposed it was you, Mr. Clifford, as we had never heard of a relative of yours, and the identical name, too."

There was a look, half surprised, half amused, on his face as he listened. Then, looking toward Isabel, he read all the pitiful story in her proud, white face; and a great, sudden light sprung to his own.

"Let me escort you to your carriage, ladies. I have a word to say, if you will permit me."

And then he told Mrs. Dunleath and Isabel how he had always loved Isabel, how he had never been sufficiently sure of her feelings to venture to declare his own, and how, when, almost in desperation, at the very last moment of their stay at home, he had resolved to confess all to Isabel, her contemptuous coldness and sarcasm of indifference froze him, and piqued him, and he let her go her way in ignorance. He told them how he had tried to conquer his love for her; how he had stubbornly determined to succeed, and—here was a specimen of his success.

And with Mrs. Dunleath smiling at him through her glad tears at the happiness that had come to her child, Clyde Clifford took Isabel to his heart and kissed her, his very own.

"But—the azaleas? Oh, Clyde, when I remember how you gave my flowers to—"

He laid his hand lightly over her mouth.

"Hush, Isabel! You must remember there are other azaleas than yours—those you saw never came from me, or you. My cousin Clyde fancied them because I loved them so, and whenever he came from the city he brought them for his betrothed. My darling, every flower you ever gave me I have carefully kept, and some day, when jealousy and distrust and pain have given place to perfect trust and happiness and love, I will show you my faded love-gauges."

"LOOK AT HOME."

Should you feel inclined to censure
  Faults you may in others view,
Ask your own heart, ere you venture,
  If that has not failings, too.

Let not friendly vows be broken,
  Rather strive a friend to gain;
Many a word in anger spoken
  Finds its passage back again.

Do not, then, in idle pleasure,
  Trifle with a brother's fame;
Guard it as a valued treasure,
  Sacred as your own good name.

Do not form opinions blindly.
  Hastiness to trouble tends;
Those of whom we've thought unkindly
  Oft become our warmest friends.

The Bitter Secret;

OR,

THE HEART OF GOLD.

BY GRACE MORTIMER.

CHAPTER XV.

AT LAST.

Mr. Price, brimming over with importance, turned eagerly to Monica. She was looking after her father with an expression of utter despair.

"You could not have chosen a more fatal moment to interrupt my interview with Mr. Derwent," said she distractedly.

"Eh? What? I hope, madam, I haven't been so infernally unlucky as to spoil the game?" returned the lawyer, his mind full of the monetary aspect of the case.

She made an impatient gesture, and turned away. What had she in common with this man? But he had not expended his hundred dollars to cross the ocean, to be ignored in this manner.

"By the signs, I perceive that as yet you have not been able to prove to your father your relationship," he blandly began. She flashed upon him with sudden wild anger.

"Wretch!" she cried, "is there nothing in the world for you but money? Go away, you enrage me with your paltry plots and counterplots; while—oh, good God! *he is doomed!*" She broke off here. What was the use of telling this base grub the terror that was upon her?

Mr. Price stared hard at her; of course he was all abroad with regard to the actual state of matters; he thought this high-stomached young lady was writhing under the affronts put upon her by her own father, who would not receive her as his child; "and no wonder," thought Mr. Price, "the infatuated girl has not the facts to show, which would bring the proud Derwent on his knees to the child of his martyred Ada." He gently placed himself in her path, when she would have escaped him, and took up the case where it had been dropped by her in the office in New York, scarcely a month ago.

"We only, as you are aware, hold a secret which will inevitably clear away all obstacles between Mr. Derwent and yourself," said he impressively, and she in her heart-broken perplexity could not do anything but stand and listen. "We only can so positively vindicate the character of the late Mrs. Derwent that her long-estranged husband will receive (with every wish to repair past injuries,) her daughter. Command me, Miss Derwent; say the word, and you are received by the proprietor of all this grand estate as daughter and heiress."

Cold as a stone she heard him out; his appeals to her self-interest she only dimly comprehended and resented with a fierce passing scorn, but his reminder that he knew that secret which would clear her mother's character in the eyes of her father, flashed with a sudden and dazzling allurement before her.

Oh, to show forth the purity of her poor dead mother—to be received as *her* daughter with honor—and then, to have the right to cling to her father, and to save his life—because *then* he would listen to her.

Fired by this burning hope, she said:

"Sir, I came here with no intention to profit by my father's wealth, but merely to see for myself what manner of man he was. I have not revealed myself to him, and have no wish to do so, unless my mother's memory is vindicated, and he is wishful for her sake to acknowledge me. You say you have learned a secret that will do all this;—I am now as anxious to hear it as I was before resolute not to hear it. It is needless to defend my motives from your suspicions. I know they are not mercenary, that is enough for me. Now, sir, tell me this mystery."

Mr. Price could with difficulty repress his delight. He had crossed the Atlantic with the expectation of having to go through no end of finessing in order to sell the secret advantageously to Mr. Derwent; and here was the contumacious heiress herself suing for it—who in the world would be so willing to pay dearly for the knowledge as she, who would receive such rich benefit thereby?

"Good—I thought you would see the sense of our advice," said he as coolly as he could;—"the pecuniary side of the question out of sight altogether, how pleasant to prove the undeviating virtue of your deceased mother, so cruelly and unjustly belied for nineteen years! I confess I had expected to have to apply to Mr. Derwent himself, but since you have seen the matter in its true light, you are the best one to negotiate the matter with. And now, to business. Already we, that is, my partner and myself, have given our valuable time and talent to this matter, besides disbursing a considerable sum in our investigations. It only remains now for me to name the sum at which we value our services, past and future; we are entirely prepared to trust to your honor or to repay us whenever you are instated in your proper position as the daughter of Mr. Otto Derwent. You understand?"

She did, and once more her very soul rose up in revolt at the whole transaction the mercenary aspect of which revolted her.

"What? and am I to count beforehand upon my father's generosity, to promise you so much of the spoil before you do my dead mother justice?" she exclaimed with passionate contempt; "*no*, let me *never* be known as his daughter—let my sweet mother lie in her grave undisturbed—I will make no league with a man of your character. These base calculations revolt me. I can have nothing to do with such. Let me alone; God will clear my mother's name in his own good time. She need never be beholden to you, who will only sell the secret of her goodness for money which it degrades me to count upon."

"You are mad," retorted Mr. Price in high wrath at her scorn. "You can do nothing without us, and you flout our way of doing business! I tell you, you are laughably obstinate You may prove your relationship to the deceased Mrs. Derwent, but *we* only can prove your relationship to Mr. Otto Derwent. That secret is ours, and we mean to sell it to the highest bidder. If you will not treat with us for it, Mr. Otto Derwent will. Do you fully comprehend that?"

With a glance of utter disdain, Monica turned from him and walked away further into the room.

"There goes a fool!" laughed the young sharper bitterly. "Did lunatic ever deserve a strait-jacket more? Very good; since she won't let me espouse *her* cause I shall espouse my own. And now to discover who will pay most for this secret of ours, the father himself, or his expectant heirs, the two Marshalls. Humph! I fancy I can manipulate *them* to some solid advantage. Meantime let *her* look out! No use for her to claim relationship *now!* I am ready to prove her an impostor. Ha! ha! ha! I think I can be even with you yet, Miss Monica Derwent!"

Monica hurried to rejoin her father; her fears for him ever rising above all thoughts of self, and driving her perforce to watch by him; she was stunned by the fresh complications of her lot, and as yet knew not how to arrange her future course; all she could do at present was to hasten back to guard him by her presence, if he would not take her warnings and guard himself.

As she passed through the glancing lights and darkening shadows of the budding glades, she heard a distant whining and pattering; one of the dogs, she thought, had lost the scent and was whimpering by himself as he strove to rejoin his fellows.

She found Mr. Derwent very near the spot where he had left her, no one by him but Gavaine Marshall. As the two men saw her approach, a singular expression crossed each face, Gavaine looking unaccountably startled by her appearance on the scene, and anger, perplexity, contempt, all blending in the scathing glance Mr. Derwent flung toward her; which he pointed ruthlessly by assuming an ostentatious air of confidence toward the young man. Yet Monica advanced fearlessly; very pale and earnest she looked, and so dignified in her mien that for all his distrust he could not ignore her as he would have ignored any other intruder.

"You have still added wonders to disclose?" cried he, disdainfully.

She stepped in front of him, and her truthful eyes looked straight into his.

"For God's sake, believe what I have told you," she said.

"I will, when you have explained who and what you are, and your motive in coming here," he retorted.

She was silent; an iron hand seemed to be crushing her heart.

If she had dared to prove to him her relationship to him, would he not listen to her then?

And she dared not do it, until she could explain away the miserable secret which had estranged him from her mother.

Had she done well in refusing to buy this secret of the lawyer at any price? This secret which would have given her the power to save her father?

And again—could she ever have expected a proud nature like his to receive with honor or respect one who had presumed to count upon his wealth beforehand?

As she stood there, racked by these conflicting thoughts, her eyes fixed in sorrowful anguish upon her doomed father's, and her hands unconsciously pressing her aching heart, the pattering and whimpering she had heard before came close; a great tawny deerhound ran into the middle of the group, his eyes red and gleaming, his tongue hanging smoking from his slavering jaws, and white foam-flecks spattered over his sinewy chest.

There was something so unusual about the appearance of the animal to the practiced eye of Mr. Derwent that he uttered a low shocked cry, and involuntarily seizing Monica by the arm, whirled her behind him. At the same moment a wild yell came from the copse, and with the agility of an ape Gavaine Marshall swung himself into the branches of the tree under which they had been standing; and was scarcely settled about six feet from the ground when he unsheathed his hunting-knife, aimed, and hurled it at the dog.

It pierced one of his ears, and stuck there, the dark blood dyeing his delicate fawn-color in an instant, and a howl and frantic bound in the air attesting to his pain and terror.

The event of the next few seconds passed like a flash; Monica at the time did not even comprehend it; it took her anxious piecing together of the various features of the scene after all was past to give her the whole matter coherently.

This is what happened in the space of, say, six seconds:

As the wounded brute leaped in the air in his surprise—for he had not seen Marshall's flight into the tree—Rufus appeared at the edge of the copse, and with every appearance of consternation worked his features and gesticulated like a madman, no sound issuing from his lips; the hound reached the ground and leaped up at Mr. Derwent's throat, seemingly with the one convulsed effort. He swerved, quick as thought, and the animal landed with its two fore paws on his shoulder, its glaring eyes and snapping jaws close to the face of Monica, who was behind, between him and the trunk of the tree; Gavaine stretched down his hand from the branch exactly above their heads, where he was lying at full length, and Monica distinctly saw him seize the knife in the dog's ear, tear it out and make a blind sort of desperate stab straight down *into Mr. Derwent's breast!* Simultaneously Rufus fired his gun into the middle of the group, the bullet whizzing past Mr. Derwent's ear, grazing Monica's hair as it passed through her vail, and lodged in the tree an inch behind her; and, too, she saw at that same instant the long flashing fangs of the dog fasten with a click in the side of Mr. Derwent's neck.

Then a strange strength entered into her, and a sense of superhuman perception of the one thing to do, and power to do it; and she saw—for she could not feel—her own two hands grasping the grisly windpipe of the dog, clutching tight as a vise the elastic baggy skin and muscular bones and sinews beneath it—dragging the convulsed and struggling bulk down—down, while her father's two hands tore at the kicking and contorting body and struck at it in a frenzy, and while he reeled and staggered about under the furious scratching of the paws, and the sickening tearing and gashing of his flesh between those iron jaws; then came another report, another whizzing bullet, more blind flashing stabs of the knife wielded from above, downward always, not into the dog's body, but *always into her father's;* and then at last (and oh, it seemed as if a long hour must have passed!) Monica felt the brawny throat grow flaccid in her gripe, the struggling ceased abruptly, and the dog dropped heavily to the ground, his red eyes bulging from their sockets, and his tongue lolling out between bloody jowls.

She lifted her eyes and looked into her father's.

And she read in their dim and swimming deeps that *he believed her now—that he knew what these traitors had done to him.*

And, ah, the piteous appeal in those proud, dominant eyes; the wild dismay, horror, sorrow, and prayer.

As he reeled back against the tree she caught him in her arms, and sunk beneath his swooning weight to her knees—his head upon her panting breast, the big tears from her swelling heart dropping on his ghastly face; then Rufus ran up, his smoking gun in hand, and Gavaine dropped from his perch, the gory knife in his clasp. And they stood together over the father and daughter, the rigid heap of dead dog-flesh beside them; they panted and wiped the sweat from their reeking brows, and glanced vacantly at each other, and for a while seemed as if they dared not look anywhere else. Then Rufus kicked the carcass of the hound over, and pointing with the toe of his foot, said:

"One of my shots did for him; look here."

He muttered so quaveringly that Monica could not have understood him had he not been so close; and Gavaine stammered in answer as falteringly:

"What the deuce does it all mean?"

Then they both looked with one accord down at Mr. Derwent, and meeting his half-open eyes resting solemnly upon them, with the film of unconsciousness fast drawing over them, Rufus spoke up with sudden distinctness:

"Mean? Why, don't you see, man, *the devilish brute was mad?*"

And Monica felt a fierce convulsion pass over the frame she clasped, and his hand going to the gaping wound in his neck, and then he uttered a terrible cry, and was senseless.

And she in her turn fastened upon the craven faces of the murderers a look so strange, so flashing with comprehension and dark with vengeance, that they grew white, and edged away together to a little distance, where they stood muttering to each other, and so seemingly struck stupid that they never thought of hastening for assistance till she cried in a voice that startled them like the clang of a bell:

"Go for help, or I will say *you* tried to shoot, and *you* to stab him!"

And as they slunk away before her pointed finger, she herself uttered a series of piercing cries that rung through the glades and thickets far and wide; then, suddenly desisting, she bent over her father, gazing wildly at that frightful wound in his neck, at the livid gashes in the white skin, and the few drops of dark, gelid-looking gore which trickled reluctantly from them; and then, though the beads of sweat oozed out on her dead-white face, and her eyes glared in her head with horror and disgust, she stooped her velvet sweet mouth to the hideous wound, and began to suck it.

And thus she was employed when Geoffrey Kilmyre came crashing through the underwood, calling loudly:

"Who is in trouble? Where are you?"

And seeing the strange tableau, he came to a dead stand over it, gazing in unutterable amazement, as if he could never gaze his fill.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE PRISON IN THE FEN.

She suddenly looked up and knew him.

"The worst has happened him," she said, in a hoarse, changed voice. "Oh, sir, why did you leave him for a moment?"

"Do not reproach me, *you* of all the world," answered he, impetuously, as he threw himself on his knees on the other side of the body and ran his hands deftly under the bloody shirt-bosom of his uncle, to find the hidden wounds which made all these stains. "Foul lies were told him about the innocent, and I went to find the victim and to prove her innocence."

"I know all that," said Monica, whose lips had gone back to their dread task while he spoke, and who looked up at him to reply with eyes shining maniacally; "but what mattered *my* good name beside his *life?* Oh, Geoffrey! Geoffrey!" she burst out wildly, sitting up and wringing her hands, "it's all over for him, I fear—*I fear*—oh, Geoffrey!" and her horror and anguish overcame her quite for the moment.

"Hush! Hush! Poor little girl! Sweet, kind little soul!"

The young man comforted her mechanically, for he had torn apart the snowy linen and was examining with shocked distress a formidable knife-gash in the fleshy part of his uncle's fore-shoulder, and trying in vain to gripe the gaping edges of the wound together that the blood might not flow so drenchingly. "This is dreadful for you to see, is it not, poor child? Yet, quick, help me here; you are as brave as you are good; not another woman among them would dare look on at this sight. Your handkerchief—tear it in strips. Stay—hold this for me—so—the lips of the wound close, while I get some water to stanch the blood, from the runlet yonder." And he ran, Monica obediently griping the red raw gash with her shaking fingers, and bending again her foam-flecked mouth to the dog-bite, which now looked pale and bluish, and bled no longer, while the heart-sickening flavor of the virus she had sucked from it sent throes of revulsion through her. Presently, Geoffrey was back, pouring the water out of his felt hat upon the cut, in hopes that the icy cold would stay the flow of blood; then he noticed the girl's strange employment.

"What is this?" cried he, stopping short with sudden panic; then he saw the dead hound, and a great cry burst from him—"Explain, Miss Rivers—what has happened?" he faltered.

"*They* set a mad-dog upon him, Gavaine goading it till it bit him—here—"

The words were cut off in the midst, for a fierce hand clutched her, twisted her off her knees, and thrust her violently aside; and Rufus Marshall's demoniac eyes glared close into hers, while he hissed through clinched teeth and white, quivering lips:

"Ye witch, ye Jezebel, who in the fiend's name are you, that knows so much? Take care what you babble, or I swear I'll—I'll—take you care—"

He sputtered with unutterable fury and menace, and then he thrust her yet further aside, and she found herself in the gripe of two long, wrinkled, yellow claws, and a terrible, gaunt, wicked, foreign face leering close into hers; and somehow her heart sunk on the instant like lead, her blood froze, and she could neither resist nor scream out her terror, but was hurried away deeper into the woods, half-dragged and half-carried by the lithe, bony, griping arms of the unknown man. She had a vague consciousness of many people clustering about her father, and of loud cries and confused voices and actions; also of the deep, stern voice of Geoffrey rising above the din, and a sudden dead silence following, broken by the high, thin, furious tones of Rufus Marshall and the coarse bullying ones of Gavaine; then

she turned her dazed and swimming eyes up to see who he was who hurried her away with such brutal violence; and seeing a pair of gleaming, hollow black eyes peering back at her, a large, pale, lipless mouth, turned down at the corners, skin harsh and yellow as ancient parchment, and withered into multitudinous, grim wrinkles, about the bony brow and flabby eyelids; a nose long, crooked, and poking horribly toward the sharp and pointed chin, with its one long, glossy, goat-like lock of dyed hair worn *a la* Imperial, and the whole ugly mask surmounted by a grotesque faded black-velvet skull-cap—a recollection of the poisoner, Vulpino, burst upon her quailing senses, and so completely overcame her that she sunk at his ugly splay feet, unconscious.

Alas, poor soul, she only awoke from that trance of horror to find herself caged; helpless to guard her father or to rescue herself from the unknown dangers which beset her.

She was lying, still wearing Miss Montacute's riding-habit, upon a bed in a low-ceiled, whitewashed room; by the sand on the floor, and the unpainted woodwork, the tiny windows and the white deal-chairs, as well as the blue, rough homespun coverlet on the chintz curtained bed, and the monstrous stucco cat and dog on the wooden shelf over the open fireplace, she perceived that she had been conveyed to some humble cottage, and left to recover herself as she might, unassisted.

For a time she could only look about her with a faint, half-dazed sense of fear and weakness; the terrible scene through which she had passed seemed to have given her a nervous shock which both stunned her faculties and drained the strength out of her vigorous young frame; the humble features of her surroundings were swimming vaguely before her heavy eyes, and the very sky, which she could catch one grudging glimpse of through a crack at the side of the dingy cotton shade which was drawn down over the window at her side, seemed strangely unfamiliar in its deep amethystine hue, for it was brilliant sunny blue when she had last seen it, and it could not possibly, she thought, be evening yet.

Presently, having collected her thoughts, and recalled the last act of the awful drama of the dog, with the curtain falling on the senseless body of her father, surrounded by his bewildered guests, and Geoffrey Kilmyre denouncing the Marshall brothers upon her accusation, they fiercely defending themselves, and she being dragged away by the uncanny foreigner who could be none but Vulpino, the Italian poisoner, she raised herself, not without a strange racking in all her bones, upon her elbow, and resting her giddy head against the worm-eaten board at the head of her bed, looked anxiously around her chamber.

A shabby little spindle-legged table stood beside her, and upon it she perceived some empty dishes of coarse blue willow-pattern, such as are used in the cottages of the very poor; a vial or two holding the dark remains of some strong-smelling medicine, and—strange accompaniment to these—a short, stumpy clay pipe, filled with cold black ashes.

She sat up still further, peering with loudly-beating heart narrowly around for some human presence, and listening with bated breath for some sound, but she was entirely alone, and the only sound she heard was the loud, slow ticking of a clock outside her door; not another breath whispered to assure her that life was near.

Feeling strangely apathetic, and as if, having scaled the topmost hights of personal terror, she could never fear again, she soon dragged herself out of bed, and crawled, on trembling limbs and with feeble hands holding on to chairs and table by the way, to the near window; she rolled up the cotton shade, which was unfurnished with roller or cord, and looked out.

The scene was entirely new to her; in all her rambles about Dornoch, (and she had pretty well investigated that locality within ten miles of the hamlet, on every side,) she had never seen a landscape of this character.

A waste of flat barren seemed to spread its dark turf as far as the eye could reach on every side, unbroken save by waving wildernesses of ferns growing rank, and tall, and black, lifeless pools between, a sheeted silvery mist rising like ghostly smoke from the unwholesome fenlands, and stealing about the cottage with a dank, death odor, that penetrated through the chinks of the ill-fitting sash and mingled with the thick, medicinal, ether-like atmosphere of the room. A high stone wall, in tolerable repair, and carefully garnished with broken glass on the wedge-shaped top, ran round the house as far as she could see, its top reaching almost to a level with the window-sill at which she stood, and in the ten-foot space of rough straggling grass between its base and the house wall, she could see, in spite of the dark shadows which filled the inclosure, a something black and serpentine, trailing its sinuous way out and in on the ground, and disappearing round the near corner. She knew it for a ponderous chain; it was neither rusty nor the paint wore off, and the grass was scarcely trodden upon which it straggled; it gave her a cold thrill of vague fear, although she guessed it must be only a watch-dog's chain, and that the kennel must be round the corner.

Having made all these discoveries, Monica next examined her prison. She tried to raise either of the two small fly-blown window-sashes, but found them rudely yet securely nailed down; no patent lock or catch was there that clever fingers might pick, but strong uncompromising spikes, driven home to the very heads by some brutal fist, and not to be drawn except by force as great, aided by the appropriate tools; the door, a rudely fashioned primitive affair of tough oak, was locked, and the key left sticking in it outside, and obstructing her view of the passage beyond; her scrutiny of the walls revealed nothing but solid lath and plaster unbroken by panel or secret door; the ceiling sloped like that of any cottage attic, the eaves cutting aslant the head room of an otherwise spacious enough apartment.

She found no closet, no press-room, nothing available for concealment or escape out of those four inexorable walls; the bed she discovered to be clamped down to the floor by a curious arrangement of iron braces and stout screws, and when she had swept away the thick white sand which almost obliterated all the cracks between the boards, she found to her amazement, and unutterable dismay, that the square upon which the bed stood was an independent piece of boarding, raised a quarter of an inch higher than the rest of the floor; and whether the main floor ran under this sinister looking platform or not, she could not see; but with a dread shiver running through all her bones she whispered to herself, "What stories I have read of beds being lowered into horrible pits, and sleepers being cast out of them to appear no more above the face of the earth! And the mechanism of the trap was always like this!"

Stripping back the faded and musty chintz hangings of the bed, she examined the tall posts as closely as she could in the waning light, but all looked innocent enough to outward eyes, and whether any machinery was concealed in these sturdy columns she could not discover. But she did discover, with unutterable loathing and fear, a tiny crystal stopper, as of the very smallest of vials, which smelled of chloroform sickeningly, and which had evidently dropped into the hollow made by her shoulders as she lay on the outside of the coverlet, and, rolling under the pillow, had been lost by those who had been using the horrid drug upon her.

Next, she examined the vials on the table; but she could not recognize these drugs; the empty basin had contained warm milk, she saw by the boiled scum, and the porringer, beef-tea and port-wine.

She sat on the edge of the bed trembling and flushed, her wonder and terror too big for the delicate frame and keen imagination to bear without anguish both of mind and body.

How long had she been cooped up here?

Had they been keeping her unconscious with ether and chloroform, and feeding her with liquids for a day, or a week?

Who was her jailer?

And—most harrowing thought of all—what was happening to her father?

"Oh, *why* was I not brave enough to keep my senses about me, and to cling to him, whatever they said or did?" she moaned, wringing her hands, and discovering in the action how unfamiliar they were to her own touch, in their slenderness and thinness.

"Good God!" she gasped, pushing up the cloth sleeve of Miss Montacute's habit, which had fitted close as a French glove to her arm the day she drew it on, and which now hung loose upon her attenuated and softened flesh, "the Italian poisoner has been trying his arts upon me. I have been kept unconscious with opiates long enough for my body to lose flesh and my strength to ooze away; and in that time what may not have befallen my poor father? It cannot be Chance that has roused me at last; they have ceased to drug me, and let me wake to consciousness again, *why?* Because all is over, and they need fear me no longer? Oh God! spare him—spare him!" she cried, falling on her knees in anguished supplication.

The last gleam of day faded out of the sky, and Monica knelt in the eerie darkness, sometimes weeping, sometimes praying, but oftenest unconsciously straining her ears to catch the first faintest sound of human life, her heart beating thick and fast whenever the wind moaned over the drear waste, rattling the shrunken sashes, and unutterable coldness and desolation stealing over her when nothing broke the dead stillness that proved her safe from the intrusion she both feared and longed for.

She had ample time to harden herself to these miserable alternations of feeling; hour by hour was ticked out loudly and slowly by the invisible clock at the landing outside her door, which, by some refinement of cruelty, had been tampered with so that it did not strike the time, probably lest it should awake her prematurely. When cold and hunger proved to her that the night was waning without bringing her any visitor whatever, she crept away from the sinister-looking square upon which the bed was screwed, and arranging the bed-clothes upon three chairs, lay down again and tried to lose consciousness in slumber; but she had slept too long already, and now her brain whirled in agonizing sentience, refusing to cease for a single moment its keen and dazzling reasonings and realizations; so that she was obliged at length to spring to her feet, and pacing to and fro in the stifling darkness, to wait the dawn in the full anguished consciousness of her situation.

Once or twice during the course of the night she heard beneath her windows the heavy soft fall of feet trotting over deep grass, and a muffled snort and inarticulate yawning sounds. It was her invisible guardian, the watch-dog stretching his legs; and as she heard no clink of the chain, she guessed that he was loose.

Alas! nothing could have more cruelly indicated the security of her prison and the inhuman brutality of her jailers. They must be fiends indeed who could ruthlessly leave a young girl alone in the depth of this waste, with a ferocious blood-hound (most probably) ready to tear her in pieces should she succeed in escaping from the cottage.

The night passed at last—at last!

So weary was she of the hideous vigil, that when the first beams of dawn reddened the white walls of her prison, she ran to the window, and stretched out her arms to the flushing portals of day in weeping adoration; and wailed for God to be kind—to be merciful, and let her rejoin her father ere night fell again.

And then, as hour by hour crept on, all through as fair a spring day as England could ever hope to see; as dawn merged into broad daylight, daylight warmed into noon—noon length ned into the crystalline afternoon—evening—dusk—and then came night again, cold, dark and desolate—ah, what terrific alternations of doubt and despair rent her soul! How she trusted in God, waited patiently, chid herself for her unbelief, and called on the Omnipotent to grant her more faith—chilled into wild conviction of treachery and death—raved madly against the unnatural monsters into whose hands she and her poor father had fallen—shrieked (in accents shrill and piercing enough to set the bloodhound racing and howling in frantic excitement round and round the house) against God's ruthless cruelty—against man's demoniac inhumanity—against the unprecedented malignancy which had penned her here! Then how she lay in semi lethargy, staring with blood-filled eyes for long hours at nothing; picturing the ghastly paroxysms of her father as he died of hydrophobia, and of herself lying in this dusty hovel dying of starvation, all her bones sticking through her bleached and glistening skin! And sometimes—strange thought at such a time surely—of Geoffrey Kilmyre's musical voice, shaken with grief and tenderness as he named her, "*brave as she was good,*" and "*poor little girl! sweet, kind little soul!*"

When midnight came—a cold, rainy midnight, without a star in the sky, or one gleam of the shrouded moon—crouching by the window, from which she had, in her frenzy, dashed out several panes, that she might at least breathe the air of heaven, she heard the stealthy fall of a horse's hoofs on the springy turf; presently the scroop of rusty hinges as some gateway creaked open; the bellowing barks of recognition and welcome of the hound, and the sound of his clumsy jumpings and gambolings; some one was in the narrow court beneath her windows, sitting quite still on a tall white horse, and the faint outline of his upturned face faintly visible in the gloom. Her jailer had come at last, either to dispatch or succor her.

For a moment a wild thanksgiving rose in her soul. Anything rather than be left to perish alone! But, this over, she could not but quail and freeze with a nameless dread, as she gradually recognized through the gloom the sinister form and face of Vulpino the poisoner.

What mercy was it likely *he* would show her, the professional murderer, the monster in human shape, who had sent many a helpless soul into eternity for gold, and who had made it his boast that he was "*always* successful," and "*never* detected?"

So, instead of calling him wildly to come and let her out, or at least to tell her about her father, or mercifully to throw her the smallest, stalest crust, to ease the excruciating cravings of her famished stomach, she cowered back from the sash, and waited in breathless apprehension for him to enter and come to her room.

She heard him dismount from his horse so softly as scarce to jingle the stirrups; then a sound of snuffing and capering among the grass, the watch-dog welcoming him joyfully; then he seemed to be patting the dog's brawny body, and to be muttering some guttural foreign endearments; then a noise of snapping jaws and snarling.

He was feeding the dog; and at that portion of the ceremonies the famished captive crept back to the broken window, and peered wistfully down, almost ready to implore her captor for one mouthful, yet shrunk back out of sight again when the ill-omened bony visage turned warily upward, and the ugly Italian listened for her movements; then she heard the mingled sounds of his and his horse's steps passing round the cottage—to the door, she hoped and also feared; and then, while she was gathering all the pride and courage of her still dauntless soul to confront the villain worthily of her breed and his deserts, once more came the *scroop* of rusty hinges, the clang of a gate, the stealthy fall of horse's feet over springy heath—Vulpino was gone!

As this terrible fact broke upon the starving creature, a wild, thrilling gush of anguish poured from her gasping heart, and the rider set off at a mad gallop to escape that fearful cry.

(*To be continued—commenced in No.* 389.)

UNDER THE WESTERN STAR

Under the western star,
Under the low gleams of the crescent moon,
I see his white sail gliding from afar
In the warm wind of June.

Blow, wind of summer, blow!
Nor linger in the gardens of the west;
Blow, blow! thou bringest all too slow
The loved one to my breast.

Too slow, my heart, too slow
For thy fond pulses, that tumultuous beat
As they would burst their bonds and seaward flow,
To clasp him ere we meet.

Fades the sweet evening light
In purple splendors of the summer dark;
But starlike in the glow of my delight,
Glimmers his homeward bark.

He comes! I hear his silver keel
Gride on the silver shingle of the shore;
Peace, foolish heart! nor all thy joy reveal
At meeting him once more.

The Californians;

OR, THE

Rivals of the Valley of Gold.

A ROMANCE OF FEATHER RIVER.

BY JOSEPH E. BADGER, JR.

CHAPTER XIII.

WHO WAS IT?

COOL, quick-witted and ready to act as Don Estevan de Mendoza undoubtedly was, the wild-faced assassin had dealt his blow and then vanished, with a weird, unearthly cry of triumph, before the Californian could move a finger to arrest him. But then, as he saw the figure of his friend and ally lying prone at his feet, bleeding and to all seeming dead, he sprung into life and action. Loudly calling several of his peons and dependents by name, he bade them take the trail of the assassin, nor leave it until they had effected his capture, dead or alive, enforcing all with a volley of curses so deep and bitter that not one of the trailers but breathed more freely when once beyond reach of his heavy hand.

Then Don Estevan turned to the prostrate outlaw, stooping low over him with undisguised anxiety. The face was covered with blood, the eyes only half opened, but with a look of wild surprise or horror frozen in them.

The Californian carefully probed the wound with his forefinger, and an exclamation of intense gratification parted his lips as he found that the bullet had simply plowed its way beneath the scalp, following the shape of the skull and finally emerging near its base. He felt almost assured that Fiery Fred was no more than temporarily stunned, as he could detect no sign of the skull's being fractured. Raising the body in his arms, Don Estevan strode easily through the court-yard and into the house, finally pausing at the door of the room where he had come to an agreement with Fiery Fred but a few minutes before. Turning to the trembling old man who opened the door for him, he said:

"Go send old Jesusita here—bid her bring balsams and bandages for a wounded man. And see that plenty of blankets are brought—in haste!"

Right willingly the old man trotted away upon his errand, while Don Estevan lowered his burden gently to the floor, while impatiently awaiting the aid he had summoned.

Not that there was any love lost between the two, the avowed and the secret robbers. One week earlier, and Don Estevan would have greeted the treacherous shot as a lucky windfall, would not have deemed it worth while sending in pursuit of the assassin, and, though he would scarcely have allowed the outlaw to remain where he fell, to die or to recover as the fates dictated, he certainly would not have soiled his own hands and dress, nor this, his private room, with the blood of his one-time trusted confederate. Deep down in his heart he hated and feared this man, and a thousand times he had almost nerved his hand to settle all accounts between them with one good, downright stroke of a knife, or a deftly-planted bit of lead. But now: he was in a precarious situation, and relied upon Fiery Fred and his unscrupulous Night Riders to rescue him. To this, then, the reader will please ascribe his angry suspense.

Jesusita—a withered, hideous old crone—soon appeared, bearing all the implements of her craft; for she was nurse, surgeon and apothecary in one, for the hacienda and its belongings. She cut little time to waste. She saw what was expected of her, and without a word performed it. Rapidly clipping away the hair, she washed the wound, then anointed it with a kind of dark, pungent-smelling gum. Whatever this was, it acted like magic upon the patient, who aroused from his stupor, with a moan of pain. Coolly Jesusita held down his hands, which were raised as though to tear away the stinging ointment, until she could place herself astride his person, kneeling upon his arms and holding his head firmly in her lap until the bandage was applied to her satisfaction. By this time, too, Fiery Fred had regained his senses sufficiently to realize that she was working for his good, and he bore her rough treatment with a patience marvelous in one of his temperament. Her ministrations ended, Jesusita arose and left the room in silence. Don Estevan stooped and lent a hand to the outlaw chief in rising. But, though his limbs trembled beneath the weight of his body, Fiery Fred refused his aid, and, paying no attention to the angry flush which suffused the Californian's face, he poured out a brimming glass of liquor and drained it at a breath. Not until then did he speak.

"Did you see that—that thing? Did you recognize its face?" he asked, with forced calmness.

"I saw—something," slowly responded Don Estevan. "A man, I suppose, though it looked more like some wild beast. Who do you think it was?"

"Nobody you know," rudely replied the outlaw, pouring out a second glass, with an unsteady hand. "Probably some one who mistook his man."

"I suppose so," drawled the Californian. "Of course *you* have never made an enemy desperate enough to run such a risk for revenge."

Fiery Fred turned quickly, his eyes flashing hotly, but the speaker was carefully rolling up a cigarette, his face looking open and candid as one who never dealt in equivokes.

"Whether I have or not is no concern of yours," he snarled. "And now—my horse. If we are to carry out that precious plan of yours, I must be riding."

"You will find your animal at home before you, I suspect," said Don Estevan, arising. "I was so deeply concerned about you that I never gave one thought to it. However, that makes little difference. You know that whatever is mine is yours as well. But are you able to ride?"

"Bah! a flea-bite only," laughed the outlaw, on whom the heavy draughts of strong drink were beginning to have their natural effect. "Order me a horse, and remember that I will be ready to carry out my part of the work whenever you give the signal."

"I have sent some of my men after that fellow, and have hopes they will bring him in. If they succeed, and he is alive, what shall I do with him?"

"Hold him safe until I can see him," said Fiery Fred, after a moment's hesitation. "But if he is the one whom I suspect, your men will never catch him, nor take him alive, even if they should stumble upon him."

"If he is such a prodigy, wouldn't it be better for you to wait until day—or at least allow me to send a couple of fellows with you?" inquired Don Estevan, with real solicitude; but Fiery Fred laughed derisively, as they left the room.

"Never you fear but I'll live long enough to do your work, and after that I'm not fool enough to think you care a curse what becomes of me."

Don Estevan made no reply, seeing that the outlaw was in a prime condition for picking a quarrel at the slightest excuse, and he was not ready for that, just yet. He ordered a horse to be saddled, and when it was brought around, secretly ordered the man to follow as close behind the outlaw as possible without letting him suspect the fact, and to stand ready to aid him in case of danger.

Fiery Fred sprung into the saddle and rode rapidly away, as though never in better bodily condition, though any ordinary man would have been flat on his back under a less severe injury. The strong liquor filled his brain, and he urged his panting mustang on over the rough trail at a speed that quickly distanced the man dispatched by Don Estevan as a guardian angel. Seemingly he had entirely forgotten the fact that his well-nigh murderer was still afoot in the neighborhood, for he looked neither to the right nor left, but spurred on toward the den where his Night Riders found secure refuge, nor did he draw rein until the sharp challenge from the niche above recalled his mind.

He promptly gave the password, and dismounted at the base of the hill. Clambering up the steep incline, he entered the cave, treading the short but dangerous passage which led into the main chamber easily as though the darkness were noonday. He found the men were most of them sleeping, lying around the rocky floor in admirable confusion, the main cause of which might be derived from the quantity of rude cups and flasks, now empty, but still diffusing a powerful odor of strong if bad liquor.

Fiery Fred paid them but a passing glance of careless contempt, then passed on through a winding passage which terminated in a small, nearly circular chamber, secured by a stout, iron-studded door, and the interior of which was quite comfortably furnished. A little cry of surprise broke from his lips as he saw that the couch or pallet of furs and blankets was untenanted, and he called aloud the name of Paquita, the dull echoes alone answering him.

For a moment he stood like one dazed, but then a low laugh parted his lips, with a little curse at his forgetfulness.

"Of course that's it," he muttered, with an air of relief. "She's gone to pump that rascal, as I bade her. What a fool I'm growing! For a moment I would have sworn *he* had been here!"

Yet the suspicion had evidently shaken him, for he caught up a brandy-flask and drank long and deeply.

Then he left the chamber, and lamp in hand, passed along through the tunnel which led to the "dark cell," where he expected to find the woman, Paquita.

He paused at the entrance, holding the lamp high over his head. Then he staggered back with a low cry of horror.

He saw that Gospel George was gone—that in his stead lay the young woman, silent and motionless as death. He believed it was death and his heart felt a sharp pang of grief such as he believed it past experiencing, as he sprung forward and knelt beside the body.

Then, for the first time, he saw that she was bound and gagged. She was nearly black in the face from suffocation, and in a few minutes more would indeed have been dead. With an angry snarl he removed the cords and tore the close-fitting gag from between her distended jaws. Then he rushed back to the little chamber, and returned with a flask of brandy. Pouring some of the liquor in his hand he dashed it madly into her face, pouring a quantity between her livid lips. To his great delight it was swallowed, though with evident difficulty. Encouraged, he repeated the application, and a moment later the large eyes opened with a long sigh.

"Thank God!" he exclaimed, fervently. "I thought you were dead, Paquita! But what has happened—where is Gospel George, and how came you here, bound and—"

At that instant there came to his ears two pistol-shots, mingling with a wild, unearthly yell, full of the bitterest agony—then all was silent as the grave.

CHAPTER XIV.

THROUGH THE TOILS.

JUST as escape seemed insured, when freedom was almost within his grasp, purchased with at least one life, Gospel George found himself at bay. It was a bitter disappointment, and for one brief moment he felt his courage fail; but only for an instant, and then he was once more himself, clear-headed and resolute, ready to meet and defy his fate.

A man's mind works with wondrous rapidity at such critical junctures. Gospel George heard the signal repeated with a sharpness that indicated impatient surprise. This told him that the men without were well acquainted with the position of the sentinel, that the entrance was habitually guarded, and that an interchange of signals was customary. If he only knew the proper answer! For an instant he was strongly tempted to run the risk of a reply. If it would only pass muster, what an easy solution of the dilemma.

In the darkness of the tunnel he might easily escape recognition, blinded as the outlaws would be by the contrast with the rosy light of the new day without. But the risk was too great. If the attempted fraud should be detected, he would indeed be lost. The entrance would be sent around, and he would then be taken between two fires.

All this flashed through his mind with the rapidity of light, and in the brief interval of dead silence that followed the second signal, he decided upon his plan, if such it could be called, when so much necessarily had to be left to chance.

As noiselessly as possible he propped the dead sentinel against the wall, himself crouching close beside the body. While thus engaged, his hand came in contact with the outlaw's belt, and with a thrill of delight he found that it supported a brace of heavy revolvers and a bowie-knife. It was but the work of a moment to transfer these weapons to his own person, and now, thoroughly armed, he felt his usual confidence fully restored.

"Hellow, in thar!" cried an impatient voice from without. "What kind o' watchin do ye call this, anyhow?"

Gospel George waited until the echoes died away, then gave a long, gurgling breath, like that of one sleeping in an uncomfortable position. The ruse was successful, as a low laugh from without assured him.

"Snoozin', by thunder! Ef the boss could only come an' see the nice cuss, now!"

"Who is it, anyway? Shell I roust 'im out with a dornick?" asked another voice.

"Not yit; le's find out who it is, fust. Ef it's either o' *them* fellers, why, we kin crowd by him an' then set the boss or Devil's Dan onto his shoulders. That'd save us a heap o' trouble."

"An' s'pose he wakes up jist in time to let daylight through us? That wouldn't be so nice, would it?"

"You kin go 'round, ef you're skeered. *I'm* goin' in this way or bu'st somethin'."

Gospel George easily overheard this conversation, with sensations which may be imagined. He knew that the moment of action was at hand, and that to hesitate meant ruin. If the outlaws were permitted to pass him, they would at once detect the imposition, and would then have the advantage of position which he now held.

He saw a shaggy head raise itself above the platform of rock, and peer keenly into the tunnel, but he knew that eyesight could avail little from there. He uttered another long, rumbling snore, and under its cover he managed to cock one of the revolvers taken from the dead sentinel without giving the alarm. And then he breathed on, steadily, like one soundly sleeping.

A second head made its appearance beside the first, and then the twain cautiously advanced until both figures were distinctly visible to the ambushed hunter. Confident in his screen of darkness, Gospel George made no motion until the leading outlaw was within two yards of his position, then he raised his pistol and fired, point-blank, springing erect at the same instant.

No surprise could be more perfect. Death-stricken, his face horribly mangled by the bullet, the leading ruffian fell heavily back, without a groan. The other man was not allowed time to recover from his surprise. Again the deadly revolver spoke, though with less certain effect, as the terrified outlaw turned to flee at the same instant. Hard-stricken, he plunged headlong, uttering a yell of agony. And then Gospel George sprung lightly over the writhing wretch and out into the open air.

The victory was his, but he knew that a moment's delay might render it worse than useless. The pistol-shots, the piercing yell of the wounded man would arouse the entire gang of Night Riders by echoing through the hollow hill. Ere many minutes his escape would be discovered, and then pursuit, hot and persistent, would be made.

With the sure and agile foot of a mountain sheep, Gospel George sprung from rock to rock, down the slope, across the narrow valley, and up the opposite side, running openly as long as he dared, then creeping and crawling behind bushes and bowlders, taking prompt advantage of every corner, nor pausing for breath until the summit of the ridge was gained.

There he did pause, crouching beneath a leafy shrub and peering across at the hollow hill. He saw a single man standing near the entrance to the tunnel, gazing eagerly around, pistol in hand. Despite the bandaged head, he recognized the form of his deadly foe, Fiery Fred, and the wild light again filled his eyes as he cocked his revolver, with trembling hand, and leveled it at the outlaw chieftain. There was a blood-red mist dancing before his vision, and he could not distinguish the sights. He brushed one hand across his eyes, with a furious curse. But when he looked again his enemy had disappeared.

"Lord God! is it always to be thus?" he groaned, clutching his throat so fiercely that his nails drew blood. "Is he ever to fail me? Will I never wash out the past in his foul heart's blood?"

Fortunately for him, this outburst of passion was as short-lived as it was violent, for he speedily saw that there was yet work before him ere he could hope for security. Full a dozen men emerged from the tunnel and scattered around upon the slope, evidently looking for some sign by which to determine the probable course taken by the fugitive. But Gospel George did not wait for this. He saw that Fiery Fred was not one of their number, and so he stole away until hidden by the hill's crest, after which he traveled more rapidly, leaving as faint a trail behind him as possible. Placing another ridge behind him, the old hunter again paused, to determine his future course, while not forgetting to keep a good lookout lest some of the searchers should chance across his trail.

"Thar's jest one thing to do," muttered Gospel George, after a deep thinking-spell, uttering his thoughts aloud, though unconsciously. "I've holed him at last, an' its jist hangin' around ontel we meet face to face. The time'll come—it *must* come!"

Once more the cool and crafty scout, Gospel George, knew that he was too near the aroused hornets' nest, and abandoning his covert, he leisurely picked his way through the rocky hills, after doubling and making detours, yet not with the air of a man who is roaming at random. But whatever his purpose was, it was speedily abandoned as he paused upon a high ridge from the summit of which he could catch a glimpse of the hollow hill in which Fiery Fred and his lawless gang found refuge.

He saw a body of horsemen riding through the valley below him, and at their head he could distinguish the outlaw chief. His face lighted up and his lips quivered like those of a hound upon a fresh scent. He traced the winding of the valley, and saw that he could easily keep abreast of the party, if he chose.

"They're up to some deviltry," he muttered, gliding rapidly along the ridge, yet keeping carefully screened from the sight of those below. "I'm goin' to find out what it is. *He's* thar—mebbe I'll get my chance at him after all!"

With dogged perseverance he kept within sight of the little cavalcade, though he had by far the most difficult route of the two. Mile after mile he dogged them, until he saw the party draw rein and dismount. A moment's watching convinced him that their journey was not yet ended, though each horse was securely tethered within a little clump of trees. He saw that the men were examining their weapons, while Fiery Fred and Devil's Dan ascended the hill until hidden from his eyes by the thick shrubbery. He watched patiently until they returned. He saw the entire party head to the left and creep up the hill at another point and then disappear over the crest.

"It's over yonder, whatever they're after, an' I'm goin' to hev a finger in the pie!" muttered Gospel George, when fully satisfied that the party did not intend returning immediately.

Rapidly descending the slope, he crossed the narrow valley and clambered up the opposite steep. In a few minutes he reached a position from whence he could look down upon a beautiful little valley—the same to which reference has so frequently been made during the course of this story.

At a single glance he took in the whole. The camp beside the lake, looking so quiet and peaceful. This was the solution: He saw the camp spring suddenly into life, as a man came running in from the lone live-oak tree. He saw a number of horsemen riding from a narrow pass nearly opposite. He saw the warlike preparations on both sides; but his keenest glances could detect nothing of Fiery Fred and his ou-

law band, though he felt assured that they were to play a prominent part in the coming drama.

He saw the "Indian surround;" the headlong charge; and then he saw the Night Riders break cover and rush down and through the stream, holding their weapons high above their heads; he saw Fiery Fred at their head, and paused to see no more.

Throwing all disguises to the winds, Gospel George dashed down the slope, plunged through the waters and bounded forward to mingle in the bitter strife, his eyes fixed upon the white bandaged-head of his deadly foe.

CHAPTER XV.

BREAST TO BREAST.

On thundered the horsemen, led by the Californian; on sped the reckless outlaws, with Fiery Fred at their head. The riders charging in stern silence, save for their rapidly detonating firearms, seemingly bent on riding directly over the little band of gold-hunters. The outlaws came yelling and screeching like veritable fiends or drunken lunatics, marking their every step with a pistol-shot, confident in their superior numbers, seemingly only anxious lest all should be ended before they could do their share of the bloody work.

Warned by the cry of alarm from Minnie Brady, Ned Allen realized the imminent peril at a single glance. And at the same time he saw that there was but one chance for them. The leaders of the two parties of assailants had miscalculated—or, had Fiery Fred "played sharp" with his ally, leaving him to encounter the first heavy shock? Be that as it may, Ned Allen eagerly seized his opportunity.

"Ready, boys!" he cried, in a clear tone. "Never mind those on foot—down with the horsemen! Don't let one of them come within arm's length—pick your men and fire!"

An irregular volley followed his words. Rifle and revolver spoke with terrible effect. The headlong charge was broken. Man and beast rolled over and over the ground in the agonies of death. Two men alone retained their saddles, seemingly unscathed by the storm of lead; but their horses were well-nigh unmanageable, plunging and kicking, snorting with terror. One of the twain turned and fled—or perhaps 'twas only his horse, not fear. The other sprung to the ground, leaving his mustang to its own devices. At his clear, sonorous shout, three men arose beside him from the struggling mass, and followed him boldly as he charged upon the smoke-lined rifle-trench.

The young captain gave a wild cheer as he observed the effect of their volley, and bade his men turn their attention to the second party. His words were partially drowned by the devilish din, but he was instinctively obeyed, and revolver-barrels grew hot with the rapid discharges. But here the work was not so easy.

Fiery Fred, when unblinded by passion, was cool and clear-headed enough. His pride had not been wounded like that of Don Estevan, and he was too cunning to rush his men upon death in one close-packed mass, where even a random bullet would be almost sure of its victim. At a word his men scattered, leaping and dodging from side to side, in a regular Indian charge. There was rapid firing on both sides. Blood was drawn, more than one body fell with that heavy, leaden thud which, once heard, can never be mistaken. But the excitement was now too intense for such deliberate marksmanship as had annihilated the body of horse. Death was coming too nigh for that.

And then came the shock, breast to breast.

The eye can follow, the pen depict the varied evolutions of two contending armies, even when bayonet crosses bayonet; but as the numbers lessen the difficulty increases, until lucid description becomes an impossibility, as now. The rival bodies become one, blended together until the eye is confused and deceived.

With the first shock, the outlaws were hurled back in confusion; but this repulse was only momentary. They had tasted blood, and were not to be denied. The next instant they had closed and were struggling hand to hand, breast to breast, over the blood-stained trench. Then it was that each man lost his identity and became part of a horrible whole.

The two younger women, with the affrighted children, cowered trembling beneath the battered wagon, afraid to hide their eyes, yet fearing to look out upon that terrible scene.

The gray-haired mother knelt between her wounded husband and son, a hand touching each, but her eyes vainly seeking to follow her two sons who were in the thick of the fight.

And the deep, heavy stupor which had fallen over the patriarch began to disappear before the frightful uproar. His eyes opened, heavily, looking dull and glassy. The lean, wrinkled hand closed tighter around his horny fingers, but the mother's eyes were still with her sons. Only for that she would have noted the rapid change, would have seen the dull mist vanish, giving place to a fitful, lurid glow, while the sunken face seemed to fill out, the veins to swell with hot blood, and each relaxed muscle quiver and swell with renewed life.

With a sudden effort Jonathan Grey rose erect, the wife clinging to him with sudden terror. But he did not seem to hear her trembling words. His gaze rested upon the confused mass of raging combatants, and seemed confused, bewildered, like one in a dream. He made a step forward, as though he would join them; but his foot struck against the body of his wounded son. Mechanically he looked down. He saw the white, youthful face, from which his foot had dragged the blanket, and in that moment he remembered.

He flung the clinging hands from him. He stooped and grasped a heavy crowbar. He strode swiftly across the scant interval and joined in the *melee*.

The first man who encountered him face to face shrunk back with a little cry of terror. It was as though a dead man had confronted him. The ashen gray face, hard and fixed as stone, with no more expression than a graven image, save for the eyes. Deeply bloodshot, they resembled coals of living fire, so fiercely did they burn.

The outlaw saw this, but no more. The bar of iron descended, and he was hurled to the ground with skull shattered to the chin. And then the blood-dripping bar rose and fell, an inexorable, death-dealing machine, as the giant strode through the tangled mass, his cold, corpse-like face only lighted by those terrible, blazing eyes.

There was one other whose actions the eye could easily follow, and that was Gospel George. His first impulse was to plunge headlong into the *melee*, and there seek his prey. But a long life of peril and experience had learned him wisdom. He knew that one could follow no given trail across a raging flood, and that the wise man kept within his own depth. His speed slackened and he paused while thirty paces from the trench, his eyes eagerly seeking for the still bandaged head of Fiery Fred. He caught a glimpse of it in the thick of the fight, and instantly fired.

A choking scream parted his lips as he saw the white head suddenly sink and disappear, and for the moment it seemed as though he must suffocate, so intense were his emotions. But then his stout will reasserted itself, and, coolly as an experienced sportsman picking off grouse, as they rise, one by one, before his cunning dog, he chose his mark among the mass and sent the leaden missiles home with unerring precision.

It was at this point that Jonathan Grey entered the fight, and from that moment the tide began to turn.

The Night Riders missed the voice of their leader, and terribly thinned in numbers, their spirits began to quail. And then Gospel George capped the climax. He saw the signs of wavering, and sprung forward, yelling and shouting in a dozen different voices, calling upon an unlimited number of imaginary comrades to charge and surround the wretches—to murder, massacre them without mercy.

His advent was the last feather. Without another blow, the remaining outlaws broke and fled in utter confusion, unpursued. The victors themselves were in hardly better case, certainly were in no condition for following up their success.

Of them all, Gospel George alone sought to profit by the victory. As the outlaws broke, he turned and made all speed across the river, up the hill and down to where the Night Riders had left their animals. He tied their halters two and two, then mounted one horse, leading four others, and driving the remainder at a gallop down the narrow valley.

Jonathan Grey stood over the body of his last victim, leaning upon the crimsoned crowbar. The lurid glow was fading from his eyes. Mechanically his feet were spread further apart, and he leaned more heavily upon the bar.

His son, Jotham, wounded and breathless, but almost wild with exultation, now saw him for the first time since the fight began, and sprung to his side with a cry of wonder. The patriarch slowly turned his head at the touch of his son's hand, and a faint smile gradually relaxed his rigid features.

"We licked 'em—didn't we, boy?" he muttered, huskily, his limbs shaking beneath his weight. "But I'm—I'm feelin' mighty—sleepy, some—how!"

He seemed trying to throw off this feeling. He drew his huge frame erect, tossing back his leonine head as if in defiance; and then he fell heavily back, dead, in the arms of his eldest born.

A shrill yell, accompanied by the thunder of many hoofs, startled the heavy-hearted defenders, and each hand instinctively closed upon a weapon, as they glanced up from their sad work. But only one man appeared in view, and he was recognized as a friend. It was Gospel George, bestriding one horse and leading twenty others, all secured beyond the chance of escape.

Even his wild triumph was quieted by the scene, and his fantastic boasting was dropped for the moment. He dismounted and secured his prizes, then glided over to where the dead lay scattered around the trench, a dancing devil in his eyes.

The prospecters had already reckoned up their losses. Four of their little party had fallen, their earthly labors ended forever. Of the rest, but two had passed through the fiery ordeal unscathed—Ned Allen and Grumbling Dick Barnes. It was a heart-sickening record. Of their little party, only six now remained alive.

One by one Gospel George examined the dead, but in vain. The body he sought for was not there. Repeatedly he scrutinized each face, his own growing strangely hard and haggard as he began to realize his great mistake. Fiery Fred had indeed escaped, but how?

He heard Ned Allen utter a sharp cry, and felt a burning sensation across his face as he turned suddenly, with a loud report ringing in his ears. He saw a man fall back, a smoking revolver in his hand, and drawing a knife he sprung forward, but paused as he saw that the fellow had swooned. A wild hope was smothered soon as conceived, for he saw that the assassin was a stranger to him.

"I know him!" fiercely grated Zabdiel, attracted by the shot. "Only fer him none o' this wouldn't 'a' bin! Out o' the way! If he's dead, I'll hev the satisfaction o' cuttin' him into fish-bait, enyhow! Stan' aside, thar!"

"The man is alive—you shall not murder him!" sternly cried Allen, interposing. "If he is the man you say, he shall be punished, but it must be in a white man's style, not like a butcher."

"I don't want to hurt you, stranger," panted the young savage. "You fit fer us like a major. But don't you come atween me an' my just revinge—don't you do it, now!"

"I call on you, friends," cried Allen. "Will you let foul murder be done here? Help me protect this man—"

"Jest say the word an' we'll chaw the young cat up," put in Grumbling Dick, showing his teeth.

"You must climb over me, too, then," and Jotham took his station beside his brother.

Knives were drawn and pistols were cocked. A bloody struggle seemed inevitable, when a startling interruption came, one that changed the situation like magic.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 391.)

A Hundred Thousand Dollars.

BY JENNIE DAVIS BURTON.

"She isn't a beauty, you see, but there's a solidity about her charms, such as they are."

"Such as they are," repeated Lulu, with a shy, wistful glance up into Geoff Malvern's face. "What does that mean, that she is wise and good! It must be, since the solidity is not in her looks."

"I should say not. Did you ever see such a bundle of bones? Sister Maude calls her an ethereal creature, but I say she is scraggy beyond all manner of use. And I have an internal conviction that like very thin people in general, she has a horrid temper, and is as jealous as sin. Her shortcomings would make a good set-off to my perfections, wouldn't they?"

"How?"

"I thought those amiable womenfolks of mine would have enlightened you before this. Miss Wynde is their happy selection for my future wife. The 'solidity of charms' consists in a hundred thousand dollars to the fore. Don't you think my merits ought to command a hundred thousand at least?"

"It is what Miss Wynde may think which must settle that question."

"I'm not so sure about it. I haven't quite decided to ask her yet. I may conclude it is going too cheap. Don't you believe that I have really offered myself up as a sacrifice until I tell you of it, little flower," with a look down into Lulu's passion-dark eyes that made the girl's heart throb in spite of herself. A look which plainly said that all his light talk *was* talk only, that under it was a nature noble and true, that he had no thought of marrying for money while love was sweet and might be his for asking.

A very untutored little maid, you see, who had not learned yet that eyes could be as false as lips. But if Lulu was not worldly-wise, Miss Mellicent Wynde was to a degree that sufficed for both.

"That pretty little creature, Mellicent," Mrs. Maude Ashcot answered her questioning, "is my nursery governess. I don't know where I shall fill her place, but I shall be obliged to part with her."

"Do," said Miss Wynde, and went to Lulu when her notice of dismissal had been served.

"Crying? Oh, you are not going away; I made up my mind to that beforehand. I want you to stay as my companion, Miss Crieff. I'll pay you as well as you've been paid here, and think I can safely promise you'll find it an improvement on being shut up in the nursery with Maude's troublesome young ones. You may as well say yes, I always have my own way."

She had it now, in spite of Mrs. Ashcot's remonstrances.

"You know you were only sending her off to nip a certain flirtation in the bud, Maude."

"Well, it was for her own good. Geoff would flirt with his grandmother if there were no one else at hand."

"He shall not flirt with me," said Miss Wynde, setting her thin lips in an unpleasant line.

But, as the weeks went on she could not feel wholly assured, and began to doubt the wisdom of her course. She had meant to force Geoff into showing his preference so decidedly that there should be no room for mistake; seeing them together day by day he must choose between the two; but Geoff heeded the sisterly warning and was devoted to Miss Wynde, without denying himself the pleasure of feasting his eyes on Lulu's rich, bright coloring. That shy, sensitive face began to wear a cloud.

"I'm a fool," said Geoff to himself. "I can't afford to throw myself away, and that settles it. I'll buy the engagement-ring to-morrow and make an end of this."

That was the business which took him into the city next day; but, choosing the ring must have proved a more momentous affair than he had anticipated. It was three days later when he returned, and then he sought Lulu first of all.

"I have fought my battle," he said. "Will you despise me for having hesitated between you two? But it is only you whom I have loved, and love has won. Can you forgive me and care for me enough to be my wife, little one?"

Could she? A glad glow leaped up into that worn little face. Lulu's sad heart had been telling her pitiful truths, but he had come in time to give her back the hope and happiness which had been slipping away from her, to restore the faith which was almost broken.

"They will all be *so* angry, Geoff. You may regret it."

"Regret being made the happiest man on earth? For their being angry—let them! Shall I show you how much I care for that by taking you in and telling them all you are to be my darling little wife?"

But Lulu's joy was too fresh. She could not bear yet to have it marred by the reproaches, the coldness and opposition which it would be a trial for her timid nature to meet. When she left him she carried her full heart out into the falling night, trying to subdue her glad excitement before she should go up to Miss Wynde. Poor Miss Wynde! the tender little heart felt for her, too.

A spark of red showed through the shrubbery, and a step sauntered down to the gate. Another step, brisk and firm, came up from the road, and the two met.

"Rogers!" in Geoff's voice.

"Myself. You didn't expect me after you so soon, my dear boy. You see, I was impressed with the idea that you didn't dive into that musty history and take so much interest in the missing heiress all for nothing. But, by Jove! it was hardly friendly, you know, to have her under your very thumb and never give me a hint."

"So, you have found it out."

"Yes, and you might have knocked me down with a feather. I saw through your little game at once. Give you joy if you succeed in roping in that hundred thousand that has been hunting for an owner these six months past."

"I accept your congratulations, old fellow. I have the honor to announce myself Miss Crieff's husband-that-is-to-be. The matter was settled less than an hour ago."

A low whistle broke from the other's lips. "It's enough to bring hard old Sandy Crieff up out of his long rest to know the sort of hands his treasured money-bags are falling into."

"I don't know any better calculated to handle them. I owe him a mint of gratitude. It would have been as much as the hundred thousand was worth to have reconciled me to Miss Wynde."

Steps and voices passed on, and Lulu sat there, stunned.

Her good fortune had been made known in the house. The family were seeking her, ready to make amends for any slight they might have put upon her in the past, and Geoff came out through the garden-walks, calling softly:

"Lulu! Are you there, little truant? Dear child, what is it?"

Even through that gloom, her white face startled him.

"It is, that I have found out how much you care for me, myself. It is, that I shall put you out of my life, and some day be glad that it was given me to know you as you are. It is, perhaps, that the spirit of my relative still lives in me, and by the sacrifice of nothing but a dream, will keep this hundred thousand dollars out of your hands."

And little Lulu was good as her word. She *did* put him out of her life, not without a struggle, though "she was shamed through all her being to have loved so poor a thing," and she *was* glad far on in the future when she found a truer heart. And Geoff was obliged to reconcile himself to Miss Wynde after all, which was a great deal better than he deserved.

Base-Ball.

BY HENRY CHADWICK.

THE UNITED STATES CHAMPIONSHIP.

The plain facts of the season entirely upset the theory of the League Association that their six clubs are the only real contestants for the base-ball championship of the United States. In 1876 there was some reason in the assumption, but this year the League nines have been whipped too badly for them to claim any such superiority as their rules would give them. The record of the season up to Sept. 5th shows that League club nines have lost no less than fifty-two games to nines outside the League arena, as follows. The names are given in the order of most victories for the outside nines, and of fewest defeats for the League nines.

Clubs.	Hartford	Boston	Cincinnati	St. Louis	Chicago	Louisville	Games won
Indianapolis	0	1	3	3	2	4	13
Star	1	1	3	2	3	1	11
Allegheny	1	1	0	2	3	2	9
Lowell	0	1	0	1	0	2	4
Tecumseh	0	0	0	1	2	0	3
Springfield	0	1	0	1	1	0	3
Cricket	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
Rochester	0	0	1	0	0	1	2
Buckeye	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Fall River	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Memphis	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Rhode Island	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Eclipse	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Games lost	2	6	9	10	12	13	52

From the above it will be seen that the Hartfords have only been defeated twice by outside nines, the Bostons standing second and the Cincinnatis third; the Louisvilles having sustained the most defeats by outsiders of any of the League clubs. On the other hand, Indianapolis leads in victories, with the Syracuse Stars second and Alleghenies third.

The full record of the real United States championship arena includes the games played by the six League clubs, and the four next strongest nines, namely, those of Indianapolis, Syracuse, Allegheny and Lowell. Up to Sept. 5th the score stood as follows:

Clubs.	Boston	Hartford	Chicago	St. Louis	Louisville	Star	Indianapolis	Allegheny	Cincinnati	Lowell	Games won
Boston	—	4	7	3	8	3	4	5	11	1	46
Hartford	5	—	5	3	6	0	3	3	7	0	32
Chicago	1	3	—	8	2	4	6	1	6	0	31
St. Louis	6	5	4	—	2	3	1	1	7	0	29
Louisville	4	6	6	6	—	0	1	1	5	0	29
Star	1	1	3	2	1	—	6	5	3	0	22
Indianapolis	1	0	2	3	4	5	—	1	3	1	20
Allegheny	1	1	3	2	2	2	2	—	0	1	14
Cincinnati	1	3	2	1	2	0	1	0	—	1	11
Lowell	1	0	0	1	2	1	0	1	0	—	6
Games lost	21	23	32	29	29	18	24	18	42	4	240

From the above record it will be seen that the Boston club takes a decided lead, with the Hartfords second and the Chicagoes third, the Lowells being last on the list on account of having played so few games, the Bostons having played 67, while the Lowells have played but 10.

NOTES OF THE WEEK.

The five leading Western clubs which have played games with each other regularly are the Indianapolis club and four of the League nines. The record shows them occupying the following relative positions in the Western championship arena:

Clubs.	Games Won.	Games Lost.
Chicago	21	13
Louisville	18	11
St. Louis	13	17
Indianapolis	12	9
Cincinnati	7	21
Total	71	71

The Chicago *Inter-Ocean* says that while Anson was playing against the Alleghenies he was decided out by the umpire for knocking Williamson over while he was attempting to catch a fly ball popped up by Hines. It was a very discreditable trick, and Anson's assertion that he did not see the player makes it even worse, as it is very improbable that such an expert player runs with his eyes closed. Next to "crooked play" come just such small mean tricks as this. There are some half-dozen players in the fraternity who would rather win the applause of the roughs and rabble by small meannesses and tricks in play like this than earn the praise of the gentlemen of the crowd by manly efforts to win. Anson is one of these, and Burdock is another. The latter is regularly in the habit of trying to hide the ball when players are on bases, and to trick his opponents out in every way he can. He may think this is "playing points." If he does he is wonderfully mistaken. Use all your judgment in playing strategical points that you can. That is a very different thing to trying to trick your opponent with low cunning, worthy only of the tricks of the prize ring. It ought to be frowned down by the press at all times.

The "Black List" of the professional fraternity is increasing. It is to be hoped that the League and International associations, as well as the League Alliance, will promptly take in hand the clubs who are now violating the rules of all three associations by employing expelled players. The list of these latter includes E. Mincher, W. C. Blogg, L. Say, P. Baker and J. Carl. Not one of these men can legally take part in any game played in which a nine of the League, the League Alliance or the International Association take part. The penalty for playing them is expulsion from the association to which the club employing them belongs. No game in which they play is legal, every contest being forfeited by the nine containing an expelled player. Make this penalty of expulsion one which throws the expelled player out of employment for the season, or until he is reinstated, and crooked play, drunkenness and disobedience will soon disappear.

Less than a hundred people were present at the last Cincinnati and Boston match. The Cincinnati trip has been a failure in every respect. The St. Louis and Boston game which followed, drew 1727 within the gate.

Mr. Sumner, the able Boston umpire, called a "foul ball" on Blong in the St. Louis-Boston match, on the 4th, for delivering the ball waist-high. The ball must be swung forward below the belt, or it is a foul ball.

The trouble at Syracuse, on the 4th inst., arose from the question of scoring a run on a fly-catch. One man was out, and Higham was on third, when Farrell hit a high fly ball to Cuthbert, who made the catch, but not until the ball had bounded up out of his hands. The moment the ball touched Cuthbert's hands, Higham ran home. The umpire decided the run as counting, as the ball had been "momentarily held" when Higham left his base. This decision the Indianapolis nine refused to abide by, and they left the field and forfeited the game. The decision was a correct one.

Hicks has gone into Cricket. He played in the Married Men's eleven on Tuesday, and made 14 runs in handsome style. He is a first-class wicket-keeper.

The record of the play of the Boston and Louisville nines, in their games together this season, shows that superior fielding decided the contest in favor of Boston:

Clubs.	Games won.	Base hits	Earned runs.	Fielding errors.
Boston	8	125	29	69
Louisville	4	120	29	85

Fielding must win in the long run. It enabled Chicago to defeat St. Louis this season, as it did St. Louis to beat Chicago in 1876.

A London, Canada, paper says in regard to the International contest for the pennant:

"It is feared that the Maple Leafs, of Guelph, and the Live Oaks, of Lynn, Mass., seeing that there is no chance for them winning the International Championship pennant, will not finish their series of games with the other clubs in the field. If such is the case, the majority of the games won from these clubs will be struck off the list by the Judiciary Committee, which will materially alter the standing of the clubs in the race. The Maple Leafs, having played two games with each of the other clubs (excepting the Live Oaks, who have no intention we hear of visiting Canada this season), only two games, according to the rule, will be struck off from their total, which will leave the Allegheny total games won at 13 and lost 3. The Tecumsehs by the same regulation will lose two of the games won from the Leafs, leaving their total at 11 won and 4 lost. In the case of the Live Oaks all the games won from them by other clubs will be struck off, because they have not played one of the series with all the clubs. By this, the Alleghenies will lose two games won from them, which will reduce their total to 11 won. Then the struggle for the pennant will lie between the Alleghenies and the Tecumsehs, each having three games to play to complete the series. The Alleghenies have two games with the Rochesters and one with the Tecumsehs, while the latter have two with the Buckeyes and one with the Alleghenies. In the event of the Rochesters being defeated in both games by the Pittsburg nine, and the Buckeyes by the Tecumsehs, then the fight for the pennant will be between the Tecumsehs and Alleghenies on the former's grounds, the winner of which will be declared the champions."

A country schoolmaster's description of a money-lender: "He serves you in the present tense, he lends you in the conditional mood, keeps you in the subjunctive, and ruins you in the future."

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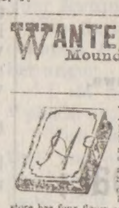
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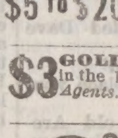
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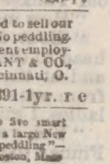
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LOVE IN A BALLOON.

BY JOE JOT, JR.

I shouted to the men below,
"Hi! hi! there; out the rope!"
And Rose and I we upward rose
In morning air—and hope.
I loved her for her pretty face
And for her golden curls—
I thought her several thousand feet
Above all other girls.

No maiden could be half so fair,
And surely none so sweet;
She was a queen on that day with
The whole earth at her feet.
The swift air played about her brow
And piped a merry tune;
My heart was much inflated, as—
Was also the balloon.

Of that dear crowd of girls below
I loved *her* best of all,
And to my eyes, compared with her,
Those girls looked *very* small.
My heart arose with the balloon
In looking at her eyes,
And in both senses did I seem
Exalted to the skies.

At last my feelings found a valve—
"Dear maid, I love you sweet,
With love that's not of earth by some
Eleven thousand feet.
This seems a romance in high life,
And if I am allowed
I'd say my head and heart to-day
Are verily in a cloud.

"My fancies take a flighty flight
Much higher than the lark's."
Said she, "You are *too* lofty, sir,
In some of your remarks."
"Nay, nay," I answered, "precious maid,
I mean just what I tell,
And rise up—in the air—to say
I long have loved you well.

"I'd whisper it unto the stars
That sing their happiest tune!"
Said she, with twinkles in her eyes,
"We're nearer to the moon."
"You are a seraph of the skies
Or I'm an awful liar;
My adoration for you, Rose,
Is hourly growing higher.

"I love you for your upward ways
And for your soaring worth,
And I am very well aware
This love is not of earth.
Maybe I've fixed my hopes too high,
And they are vain, alas,
But you've the anchor of my soul;"
The maiden whispered—"*Gas!*"

"Oh, Rose, your cold indifference
Makes all my spirit sick.'
Said she, "It's easy to perceive
You're a balloonatic,
And you had better lower yourself."
Her voice with chills was fraught,
"And let me tell you plainly, sir,
You are an airy-naught."

My hopes, so ballasted with grief,
Came down some miles about,
And though in basket quite secure
It happened we fell out.
I saw she did not love at all,
And so I *let her drop*,
And pulled the rope and coming down,
I saw I was *gone up*.

The Flyaway Afloat;

OR,

THE YANKEE BOYS AROUND THE WORLD.

BY C. D. CLARK,

AUTHOR OF "YANKEE BOYS IN CEYLON," "CAMP AND CANOE," "THE SNOW HUNTERS," "ROD AND RIFLE," ETC., ETC.

VI.

THE BORNI RAJAH.—THE LAST OF TONAN MAI.

THEY had scarcely passed the sand-hills which ran along the shore when a half-naked man was seen running toward them, waving his hands in the air and shouting to attract their attention. As he came nearer they saw that it was a white man, but for the time being robed in the scanty dress of the Borni.

"Helloa, strangers!" he shouted; "travelin' or goin' som'ers?"

In spite of the gravity of the situation, a perfect roar of laughter broke from the Yankee sailors at this speech from a man who wore in his head-dress the waving feathers of a Borni chief.

"Who are you, friend?" demanded Dave Sawyer, looking at him intently.

"Don't you know me, Captain Dave?"

"I've seen you before, but I can't place you, my man."

"Saul Blossom, harpooner in the old Arethusa. Your right-bower once, Captain Sawyer."

The two shook hands warmly. Saul had been an able seaman, but was lost off the coast of Australia, and was supposed to be dead.

"I'll tell you all about it another time, Cap. Here I am, Rajah of the tribe of Ichar, and do you know, that the old man is nearly sick of glory? I guess if you'd give me a chance, I'd be likely to ship."

"Enough of that, Saul. You shall go with us if you wish, but we are in haste. Have you seen a company of Malays going inland?"

"I've seen a man I've sworn to kill. I mean that cursed Malay pirate, Tonan Mai. Five long years he ground me under his heel, because there was no one to pay a ransom for an old Yankee sailor, and I'll have revenge."

"How many men did he have?"

"'Bout fifty, I reckon. See here, Cap—you head to the east and march easy for five miles, and at the end of that time you'll get a signal from one of my men. You are arter them two ladies, I guess."

"Yes, yes!" cried Dave Sawyer and Captain Finney together.

"Yaas. Then we've got to work some plan to get the wimmen out of the'r hands, or they'll kill 'em when they see they are overmatched. It is jest the nat'ral cussedness of men like Tonan Mai. Now, I know this kentry and you don't, and you jest leave it to me. And if I don't git them gals out of his hands without hurting a feather, my name ain't Saul Blossom."

"If you do that you shall have a state-room aboard my schooner as first mate under Captain Sawyer," declared Dick.

"I wouldn't have you think I'm doin' this for pay, sir," answered the man. "I'd rather do it for the sake of them two purty critters; I would, indeed."

"Go, then, my brave fellow, and do your best," plead Dick Wake. "I will not forget it in the time to come."

"All right. Now, you go on as I say, and when you see a man come out of the woods and blow a sea-conch, then you may know you are to foller on a charge. My men ain't good fur Malays, as a rule, but they are game to the core, as fur as they go."

He turned and plunged into the woods, and they advanced in silence at a leisurely pace, waiting for the signal of the Yankee rajah.

In the meantime Tonan Mai and his men were advancing rapidly, heading for a northern point of the island, where there was a city of his friends, and where he could easily procure transportation into his own country. The great storm which had arisen had driven his proa upon the shores of Borneo, but he had managed to save his prisoners, who, nearly worn out, were now being carried upon litters borne by stalwart Malays. The two women were pale, but firm. They saw no hope of escape, for they did not dream that those they loved were so close upon their track.

"Daughter of the East," said the Malay, in his figurative language, "how is it that such a flower should bloom in the bosom of a stranger? Why have you not loved one of the stronger race, the terror of the Malay seas?"

"My husband is not weak," replied Rona. "You have met him in battle, and you know it."

Tonan Mai stamped angrily upon the earth as he remembered the fruitless attack upon the Flyaway.

"I swore then, as I stood upon the deck of his schooner, that the brood of the serpent would turn and sting. I have said it, and it is so," he cried.

As he spoke they gained the crest of an eminence, and saw three or four natives watching them from the edge of the woods. The Malay advanced and shouted to them in a friendly manner, but they did not seem inclined to come forward. At last they advanced in a hesitating manner and began a parley with the sheeref, which ended in two of them going away to call their rajah. Half an hour later they were joined by a body of nearly seventy native warriors, all strong and hardy-looking men, led by the Yankee rajah, Saul Blossom.

"Ha!" cried the Malay. "Is it you, then, who are rajah here?"

"Why not?" replied Saul Blossom, speaking the language of the Malay easily. "My people are not accustomed to be slaves, and they escape as soon as they can."

The Malay looked fiercely at the speaker, but he was not in a position to show his hand yet. Saul Blossom had more men than he and they looked strong and warlike. On the contrary, the Malays were somewhat worn by their long voyage, and not a few of them bore upon their bodies unhealed wounds, which they had received in the encounter with the men of the Flyaway.

"Let us be friends," and he offered his hand, but Saul Blossom drew back.

"I won't take the hand of a man who has beaten me like a dog," was the Yankee's answer in a tone that the Malay could not mistake. "We never can be friends, but I want to see you out of my country, and my men don't care to fight unless you make them. I guess you don't hanker after a muss with us, Mister Malay."

Sheeref Tonan Mai ground his teeth in a rage, but as he looked over his weakened band, he saw that the rajah had spoken the truth, and that it would not do to quarrel, so he returned:

"Let it be as you say. Go your way, and we will go ours."

"Do you want to buy a proa, Malay?" asked the rajah. "I've got one down here in the bay and you can have it for that diamond you wear."

"I will buy it," and the Malay eagerly detached the diamond, a jewel worth twenty thousand dollars, from the loop of his sarong. "Lead the way to the proa, and this diamond is your own."

The rajah at once took the lead and struck for the coast in a diagonal line. After a march of half an hour a man came out of the woods and looked at them earnestly.

"Let some of my men carry the prisoners," ordered Saul. "Your people are very weary."

The Malays were glad to make the change, and eight strong Borni took up the litters and bore them on. A single Bornean walked in front to show the way, then came the Malays, followed by Saul Blossom and the sheeref, then the Borni, and last of all the men carrying the litters. At this moment Saul took the lance which he carried and raised it above his head in a peculiar manner. As he did so the man who was watching them suddenly disappeared.

"What is this?" cried the Malay. "Where is that man gone?"

"I don't know," drawled Blossom. "Don't be sassy, sheeref; you ain't in your own kentry now, I guess."

At this moment the note of a conch was heard not far in front, and instantly Blossom sprung back in the midst of his men, who, at a signal from him, formed a ring about the litters. Three ranks were formed, the first kneeling and presenting their long spears, the second stooping and also advancing their spears, while a third, standing erect, began to prepare their bows.

"Slave!" shouted the Malay, "what does this mean?"

"It means that I won't stand by and see white wimmen go as slaves into the country of a cursed human tiger of a Malay," replied Blossom. "You are fooled, sheeref; you'd better light out."

The warlike Malay glared at the speaker for a moment, and then, with the wild battle-cry of his race, hurled himself upon the spears of the Borni, followed by his men. He was instantly hurled backward by a blow from a club in the hands of Saul Blossom, a blow so terrible that the blood swam before his eyes, and his senses seemed leaving him. But the Borni were not all as brave as their rajah, and the Malays quickly broke through the first line of spears and forced the Borni back in a confused mass, still, however, keeping the women in the center. Once at close quarters, the Malay creese was more than a match for the unwieldy weapons of the Borni. Down they went, man by man, and the ladies saw with horror that Tonan Mai would beat their savage friends.

"Strike, sons of the serpent!" cried Tonan. "Down with the black dogs, but save the rajah alive, if you can. I will make him lick the dust under my feet."

Saul Blossom struggled desperately to reach the speaker, but he dreaded the power of that strong arm, and kept carefully out of the way. The Borni fought desperately, but the last circle about the ladies was nearly broken, when a charging cheer was heard, and the men of the Flyaway were seen advancing on a run, with Dave Sawyer at their head. Close behind them came the British marines, with their muskets at the "right shoulder shift." The Borni took heart, and again bore back their enemies at the points of their long spears. Then, no longer hampered by the press of his men, Saul Blossom threw himself upon Tonan Mai.

The Malay saw that all was over, and rushed to meet the man whom he blamed most for his defeat, and struck furiously at his breast with his blue steel creese. Saul leaped nimbly aside, and his club fell with crushing force. The Malay threw up his hands and fell dead at the feet of the man who had been his slave.

"I swore to do it if we ever met!" cried the Yankee rajah, as he set his foot upon the prostrate form. "Hurrah! the battle is ours!"

By this time the Borni had scattered the last of the Malays, and were pursuing them in knots of two and three. Not one of them escaped, but before the chase had fairly begun, Rona was in the arms of her husband and Mrs. Finney was clasped to the breast of the brave captain, while the Parsee looked calmly on, with a benignant expression upon his noble face. He had done his work well.

(*To be continued—commenced in No. 390.*)

Tales Worth Telling.

BY LAUNCE POYNTZ.

II.

MAC GAHAN'S RIDE.

I SUPPOSE many people think they could make good newspaper correspondents.

Perhaps you could, my friend, and again, perhaps you may be mistaken.

No doubt you think a correspondent has what low people—brokers and such like—call a "soft thing" of it, getting good pay, and doing nothing but write an occasional letter to his paper, giving the news from Paris, or London, or Constantinople, or Ujiji, or any of those barbarous places, where the people live who never eat pork and beans, and who are quite innocent of the meaning of Thanksgiving Day.

You are quite right as to one thing. All our friend, the correspondent, has to do is to write *the news* from the place where he happens to be. So much is certain.

But the question is, how is he to get the news, and which of it is interesting. The letter must be written, but what is to go into it? In Paris or London, "our own correspondent" is supposed to be on intimate terms with kings and queens, to know all the nobility, to be able to tell all the gossip of the aristocracy, and yet the poor devil may be a perfect stranger in the land, when he goes there.

But if the correspondent has to stir his wits in peace time to find materials for his letters, his lot is an easy one compared with the trials of that curious being, the "special war correspondent" of some great daily paper. That man has indeed work to do.

He is expected to know, or at least make a true guess at, the plans of the commanding generals on both sides, to know when armies will move, what the enemy is doing, where he is, how many men he has got.

That is comparatively easy, one may say. He has only to repeat camp gossip and guess at the rest. Very true, but three mistakes will cost him his place, for above all things a war correspondent must give true news, or he is worthless. Then he has got to make friends among the generals, who all hate war correspondents as a rule, and try to give him false news. Altogether, he has a hard time of it in a campaign. In battle, it is worse, for he is in everybody's way, and has to go into the same danger as the soldiers, with no excitement to keep him up, writing notes of movements while the bullets are flying all round him.

Altogether, he earns his money.

So Mr McGahan thought, one bitter January day, in Moscow, when he received an order from the editor of the *New York Herald* to take a little ride of three thousand miles, catch a Russian army somewhere in Tartary, supposed to be on its way to Khiva, and write up the campaign in full.

McGahan was an old war correspondent, and had been all over the world in the service of different papers. In Russia he had lived long enough to learn the language, and what would have been impossible to another man was fun to him. In five hours he was ready, with a full valise, and a fuller purse, and was off on his journey.

To realize the difficulties of the task before him, you must remember that there were no railways where he was going, that the country was covered with deep snow, the thermometer thirty degrees below zero, and a keen gale was blowing over the frozen shelterless steppe.

All he knew of his destination was that General Kauffman, whom he was seeking, had been ordered to start in March from Tashkent in Turkestan, to take Khiva, that five previous Russian expeditions to the same place had ended in massacre or starvation, and that it was very doubtful, when he got to the Russian frontier, if the officers would allow him to go after Kauffman.

Pleasant prospect for McGahan.

However, he started, along with a friend, Mr. Eugene Schuyler, of the American legation, and bought a *tarantass* to make the journey.

Did you ever see a *tarantass?* It's a very queer looking concern, but it's just the thing for traveling on the steppes, where wheelwrights and blacksmiths are scarce, and a Brewster buggy would smash up the first mile. There are four stout heavy wheels, about as thick as those of a coal cart. Two long spring poles of green wood unite the axles, and a big box, with a leathern hood and curtain, is put on the poles. If the poles break down, they can always be replaced from the nearest pine wood, and as there are no nails in the concern, nothing but rawhide straps and thongs, those are provided just as easily.

Bundling themselves up in sheepskins, the two friends started on their journey over the great southern steppes, in the midst of a Russian winter. How they fared till they got to the frontier would be a long story to tell, but on the 19th of April, 1873, they found themselves at last at the frontier of Siberia, within a fem miles of the sea of Aral, at the little Russian town of Kazala, on the Syr Daria or Jaxartes river.

They had left winter behind them and come into spring. The thermometer stood at 85 in the shade already. Then they began to ask for General Kauffman, from the commandant of the place.

General Kauffman had started three weeks before, and was supposed to be about three hundred miles off.

To get to him they would have to cross the desert of Kyzil-Kum, inhabited by the Kirghiz Tartars, who were all haters of the Russians, and born robbers.

"Very well," said McGahan, boldly; "if I can get horses, I will start to-morrow."

You see the tarantass was no more good, as post-horses were not to be found in a desert.

But the commandant of Kazala shook his head. They could not go any further. There was a standing law of Russia to the effect that no European, not in the Russian service, could be allowed to cross the frontier into Central Asia. The real reason of this was to exclude Englishmen, of whom the Russians are intensely jealous, from getting to Khiva and Bokhara; but as they cannot openly assign that for a reason, they keep out all Europeans.

But McGahan was not to be beat so easily.

"We are not Europeans at all. We are Americans, allies of Russia. Your Grand Duke Alexis is in America, now, or was a few months ago, having a splendid time. Besides, we have passports."

The commandant was inflexible. They were foreigners, and their passports were only good inside Russia. McGahan knew that well enough, and knew also that he never could have got permission to visit Kauffman, had he asked at Moscow. The commandant further told them that if they got into trouble in Turkestan and were killed, he should be blamed. He could not take the responsibility of letting them go over the desert.

"Well, then," said McGahan, pretending to give in, "at least we can travel along inside the frontier, to the next post, Peroffsky."

Yes; the commandant had no objection to that.

So the travelers once more resumed their places in the old tarantass, and reached Peroffsky three days after. Mr. Schuyler here concluded that he would keep on inside the frontier to Tashkend, whence General Kauffman had started, and follow up his march. This was safe but slow, and Mr. Schuyler, being on a government mission, did not feel justified in running into danger. Not so McGahan. He was bound to catch the Russians before they took Khiva, and so get the first news to the *New York Herald*. He knew that the London *Times* and the *Illustrated London News* had men in the field *somewhere*, but he trusted to his luck and being an American, to beat them.

The commandant of Peroffsky turned out a good-natured man. He would not help McGahan to go, and he told him he was a madman, but he did not hinder his procuring horses; and three days after reaching Peroffsky, the plucky war correspondent of the *Herald* crossed the Syr Daria, and struck into the desert of the Kyzil-Kum.

His party was very small. He had a Tartar servant called Ak Mamatoff, a lazy, lying old scamp, who could speak every language of Turkestan, but who was always trying to hinder his master from going any further. Besides him there were two Kirghiz Tartars. Six horses, two of them to carry packs, were in the party. McGahan had a Winchester rifle, two revolvers and a saber, and each of the Tartars had a breech-loader and revolver, so that they promised a good fight to any robbers; but their grand protection was that they had nothing to be stolen.

Quite contrary, however, to McGahan's previous information, he found the Kirghiz on his road, brave, kind, honest and hospitable. They were all on the move from pasture to pasture, driving their flocks and herds, and whenever night came, McGahan always looked for a Kirghiz camp, called an "aoul," and was always met with a hearty welcome.

He struck off through the desert to the southwest from Peroffsky. Khiva lay due southwest, on the banks of the Oxus river, which runs into the sea of Aral just as the Syr Daria does.

Tashkend was a long way off, up the Syr Daria, to the southeast, and McGahan thought that, if he made toward Khiva, he would probably strike Kauffman's trail going there, as he knew he could move faster than the army.

This was the reason he took nothing but horses for the little Kirghiz horses are tremendous travelers. They will keep up a sort of ambling trot all day long, living off grass and desert bushes, and McGahan's animal carried him for three weeks, nearly sixty miles a day, even though half-starved all the time.

The first few days of the march were rapid and pleasant. The little party followed the bed of an old stream that once ran into the Syr Daria, finding proofs of water here and there, and plenty of grass. They started the 30th of April, having been detained two weeks at Kazala and Peroffsky. In five days they reached the springs of Irkibai, where they found a Russian fort established. This had been left with a garrison by the Russian column that had started from Kazala to join Kauffman, but whose tracks McGahan was not permitted to follow; and here the enterprising correspondent found that an embassador from the Khan of Khiva who was also hunting for General Kauffman, had halted.

The Russians were of course amazed to see the man who had rode alone through the Kyzil-Kum desert, but begged him not to go on, as the way was getting more and more dangerous.

McGahan only laughed, and asked for news of Kauffman, whom he now hoped to overtake very soon.

Next morning, he was away on the trail of the Kazala column, having been treated with great kindness by the Russian captain, who gave him barley for his horses and refused to take any pay. Now, however, his real troubles began. It was sixty miles to the next well at Kyzil Kak, and the thermometer was standing 100° in the shade.

However, his progress so far had been so good that he started gayly on the journey, provided with two water-skins, and reached the well of Kyzil Kak next day at noon. Like all the wells of that curious country, no one knows who dug it. It is about sixty feet deep, and remains just the same as it was when the horses of Tamerlane's cavalry were watered there, four hundred years ago.

At Kyzil Kak McGahan met a caravan and bad news. Had they heard of the Russians? Yes, and seen them. Where were they? At Tamdy, a hundred and fifty miles south-east.

Poor McGahan's heart began to sink. Had he come all this way expecting to meet Kauffman, and was the Russian general going away from him? Khiva was due west, and here was Kauffman moving south-east.

It turned out afterward, however, that this very fact saved McGahan a fruitless chase. General Kauffman had indeed turned aside to Tamdy and a well called Aristan bel Kuduk, but it was only to get water, and he soon resumed his march west, and came up toward the pursuing correspondent.

There was nothing to do but to press on, trusting to the speed of the march to overtake the Russians, and McGahan rode on to the next well, called Tandjarik, twenty-five miles further, reaching it next evening. Here he met a little *aoul* of Kirghiz, who welcomed him to the well, watered his horses, and entertained him hospitably.

From them he heard good news. Kauffman was at Khala Alta, to the *south-west*, and moving *north* to Khiva. Overjoyed to find that he was nearing the Russians, the bold correspondent procured a guide from the Kirghiz, and started next morning for Khala Alta, which he reached, after a three-days' march, half starved and choked, only to find that Kauffman had passed. On the way there, one of his pack-horses gave out and died, man and horse were without food or water for nearly two days, and he found at Khala Alta short water, no barley, and, worst of all, a sulky German colonel in command of a fort, who refused to let him go any further.

Here indeed was a tantalizing set down. The colonel, like a good many Germans of low class, when in authority, was a surly, ill-conditioned fellow, who refused to let McGahan go on, refused to sell him barley for his horses, bread for himself, to do anything in fact. Very luckily for our hero, the other officers were Russians and gentlemen, and they received him with great hospitality, abusing the "German pig" without stint.

It was very little, however, that any of them had, and poor McGahan fared badly for nearly a week. At last he concluded to steal away in the dark, and it so happened that the very day he had determined to leave Colonel Weimarn, the latter concluded to follow after Kauffman himself, and started his column at night.

Once on the march, McGahan found it quite easy to slip away; and, weak as his poor horses were, he outmarched the slow column, and got before them to the wells of Alty Kuduk, where he found another Russian fort and detachment, this time inhabited by gentlemen and friends, who shared all they had with him. They had been left by Kauffman only three days before, to guard the wells, which had saved his army from perishing with thirst.

Now at last McGahan was nearly over his troubles. His horses were rested and fed, and the next day he was in the saddle, having escaped Colonel Weimarn and every one else, safe on his way to Kauffman.

He little knew what a near escape he had, however. Only three hours after he had left Alty Kuduk, up comes an officer, with an escort of twenty-five Cossacks, who had traveled all the way from Tashkend, 600 miles off, with orders to arrest him and send him back. This order came from a civil magistrate, but the officers at Alty Kuduk only laughed at the messenger, telling him that McGahan by this time was either with Kauffman or killed by the Khivans, who were hovering round the army in crowds. He might follow him, if he dared.

He did not dare.

Meantime McGahan pressed on to the River Oxus, finding the abandoned camp-fires of Kauffman all the way, but seeing not a soul in the country. It was pretty ticklish work; but at last, on the third day, he heard cannon, and came in sight of the Russian army, fully engaged with the Khivans, at a little fort called Sheik Arik, fighting with artillery across a river. Scattered horsemen were between him and the Russians, evidently Tartars, and whom they belonged to was doubtful.

He had made up his mind to run the gantlet if they were Khivans, when two of them came toward him, and were recognized by Ah Mamatoff, his servant, as friendly Kirghizes.

Half an hour later, he met Kauffman.

And what said Kauffman?

Told him he was a *molodyetz*—Russian for "brick"—welcomed him to Khiva, and offered to send his letters back by the Government courier, whenever Khiva was taken.

The result of McGahan's pluck was that the first news of the fall of Khiva was telegraphed from New York, as it came out in the *Herald*, to London, for not an English correspondent got through.

Old Tom Gregg's Rescue.

BY OLL COOMES.

"TALK about boys not havin' fun, inginuity and business in their hands all to once, will ye?" remarked Old Tom Gregg, the borderman, as he, Kemply, Hemphill and myself, along with several others, were seated by a glowing camp fire on the banks of the Upper Missouri. "Why, gents, I'll take a boy in preference to a man for thinkin' up ginuwine, royal deviltry, and in inventin' new tricks and trades. I, Thomas Gregg, know whereof I speak. I, hunter and trapper, have been *thar;* and if you jist want to have things lively as a hornet's nest, I'd recommend that you git in with a brace of rollickin' rip-roarin' boys.

"Let me tell ye my experience with a pair o' them. 'Bout ten years ago I was trappin' all alone up on the Yallerstun, when one day along comes two trapper-boys, mounted on ponies, with a hull outfit for trappin'. Their names war Joe Beems and Lee Shepherd; and I took 'em in for the night, and afore mornin' they took me in—into partnership with 'em in the trappin' business. They proved to be sharp as aquafortis and reckless as a mule's heel, and so we went to work. I tell ye what, the firm of Gregg, Beems and Shepherd made the fur fly like sixty; and once in a while a leetle hair'd come with it, for them tormented boys *would* peel an Injin's head every chance they got. They done it for revenge, for the reds had killed their friends; but I told 'em we'd have to dissolve if they didn't quit it, but I might as well talked 'bout dissolvin' a rock in water. You can't break a boy of havin' fun no more'n you can harness lightnin' to a gig; and so they went on trappin' beavers and pesterin' the heads of the red-skins until the hull Injin outfit got on their auraculars, and begun to give us fun.

"One day they captured me and Joe Beems and husseled us off to'rds their stronghold. When night come on, of course they camped in the woods, and tied us up to a tree. They struck a fire, eat their grub and smoked their pipes, then all but one laid down to sleep, while little Joe and me war left standin' thar, straight as stone images. I wasn't thinkin' anything 'bout Lee Shepherd till I suddenly heard the far-off scream of a wildcat, and see'd Joe look at me and wink and then snicker to himself. Gracious Peter! how boys *do* understand each other. Wal, about ten minutes had slid into eternity, when all of a suddint somethin' come crashin' through the shrubbery and rolled into the heart of camp. A glance told me what it was; it war my favorite beehive—a light bark consarn, and a swarm inside that I sot great store by, for they war the best workers that ever sucked dew from a wild flower or manufactured beeswax."

"And were the bees in it?" asked Kemply.

"*In it?* I reckon they war; but they didn't stay long arter the hive rolled into camp. The minit it hit the ground they rushed out in platoons, humming, hissin' and buzzin', and, oh Lord! if ever you see'd a lively time, it war then and thar! Of course the little sharp-tailed varmints bounced captors and captives alike, and heavens! how they *did* pepper their javelins into us. Joe and me stood our ground 'cause we couldn't help ourselves; but the Ingins undertook to fight 'em, and, heavens! how the little honeymakers *did* scorch it to the red varmints. To add to the commotion, Lee Shepherd came rippin' into camp, screamin' like a painter, and the hull kit of Ingins lit out, s'posin' the Old Scratch had bounced 'em. The next minute Joe and me war free, but it's an actual fact, Lee had to lead us home, for we war stung blind.'

"The remedy was worse than the disease," laughed Hemphill.

"Yes; but you see Lee had fun and business combined. The tarnal little rascal had wrapped the bee-hive in a blanket and toted it ten miles just to—to—wal, it was all right the way it turned out. But scarcely was the swellin' out o' my eyes afore six more Ingins swooped down on our ranch and took me a prisoner some more; and in order to elude pursuit by the young avengers, Joe and Lee, they took a different route homeward—went across the Big Prairie, as we called it, where the grass was so deep and thick that one would think it impossible to follow a trail.

"I came to the conclusion that my hash was cooked. The boys had gone off that mornin' on hoss-back and was not likely to be back fur a day or two, and so I, Thomas Gregg, hunter and trapper, made myself easy on one thing, and that was death. Night overtook us on the prairie—a dark, gloomy night, and so my captors halted to wait till the moon came up As the reds s'posed they war out of reach of human eyes, they struck a fire. As they had no fuel but buffalo-chip they had no light but that given off by the red coals. The chips would not blaze, so our light was a feeble affair, yet sufficient for me to distinguish the devilish look of triumph on my captor's faces.

"They made me set down, and then tied my arms together under my legs so I sot all humped up like a frog in a thunder-storm. Then the devils sot down 'round the fire and smoked and talked and waited for the moon; and thar they sot, when, suddenly, a strange sound out upon the prairie started every dog of them to his feet. *I* didn't git up for reason I couldn't; but next moment I heard a 'swish' 'thung,' 'thung,' in the grass, and then something struck me across the breast and knocked me a keelin' over. A yell of dismay burst from the red-skins' lips, and when I again got straightened up, I saw the Ingins were standing lookin' into the darkness with horror painted upon their visages.

"Not one of them, or me either, for that matter, knew what had struck us; and while I war cogitatin' over the mystery, I ag'in heard that dreadful sound like the sweep of a serpent, and at the same instant I see'd the feet of an Ingin pop out from under him, and the fellow came down like a log, flat on his face. And skeersely was he down afore every savage's heels flew out from under him and he came to earth ker-whop! I thought some of 'em war bu'sted, and I expect I'd 'a' laughed if that same invisible hand hadn't give me a rip in the side and knocked me heels over appetite.

"And, sir, afore I could git up ag'in, that same unseen hand swept over camp ag'in, knockin' every Ingin sprawlin' flat. And then they war scarcely up ag in afore down they went, howlin' as if with mortal agony and superstitious horror. At the same moment something struck me across the lower extremity of the jacket and doubled me over until my nose touched the toe of my moccasin. Before I could straighten out, I felt myself bein' dragged backwards along the earth as if a team of double-geared lightnin' was harnessed to me. Heavens and earth! how I was snatched through the grass! Green as the verdure war it fairly smoked. How fur I was yanked along, I don't know nor don't want to know; but I was finally permitted to come to rest, and now what do you s'pose had dragged me?"

"I can't imagine," said I.

"It was a rope—I was actually doubled over a rope like a pa'r of pill-bags over a clothes-line."

"A rope!" Kemply exclaimed, in surprise.

"Yes; a rope forty rods long, nearly, to each end of which them infernal boys, Joe and Lee, had a pony hitched, and with the animal's feet muffled, had been gallopin' up and down the prairie—one on each side of camp—draggin' the middle of the rope across camp and then back like lightnin', while they war unseen in the darkness.

"So you see what the earthquake was that was knockin' the trotters from under the red-skins, and got me out o' their clutches that time.

"Oh, you may laugh, men, till you explode; but for mischief and business at the same time, give me a brace of wild trapper-boys. Judas Iscariot! I didn't set down for a month arter that slide backwards over the prairie, doubled over a rope with a hoss on each end of the rope, and a lump of animated deviltry on each hoss. But boys will be boys, say what you will."